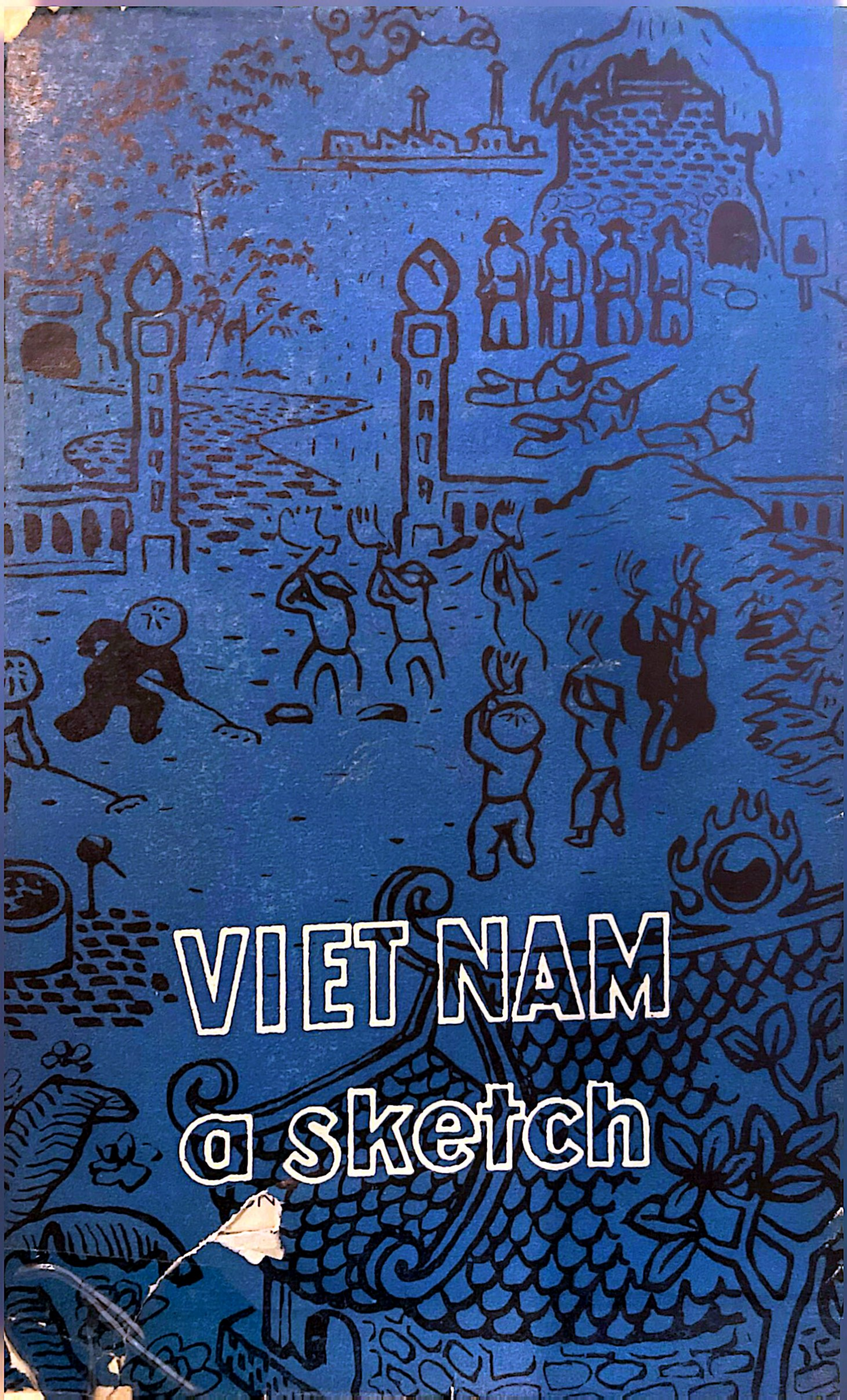

VIET NAM
a sketch

Viet nam a sketch

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VIET NAM
a sketch

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National Flag of the D.R.V.N.

National Emblem of the D.R.V.N.

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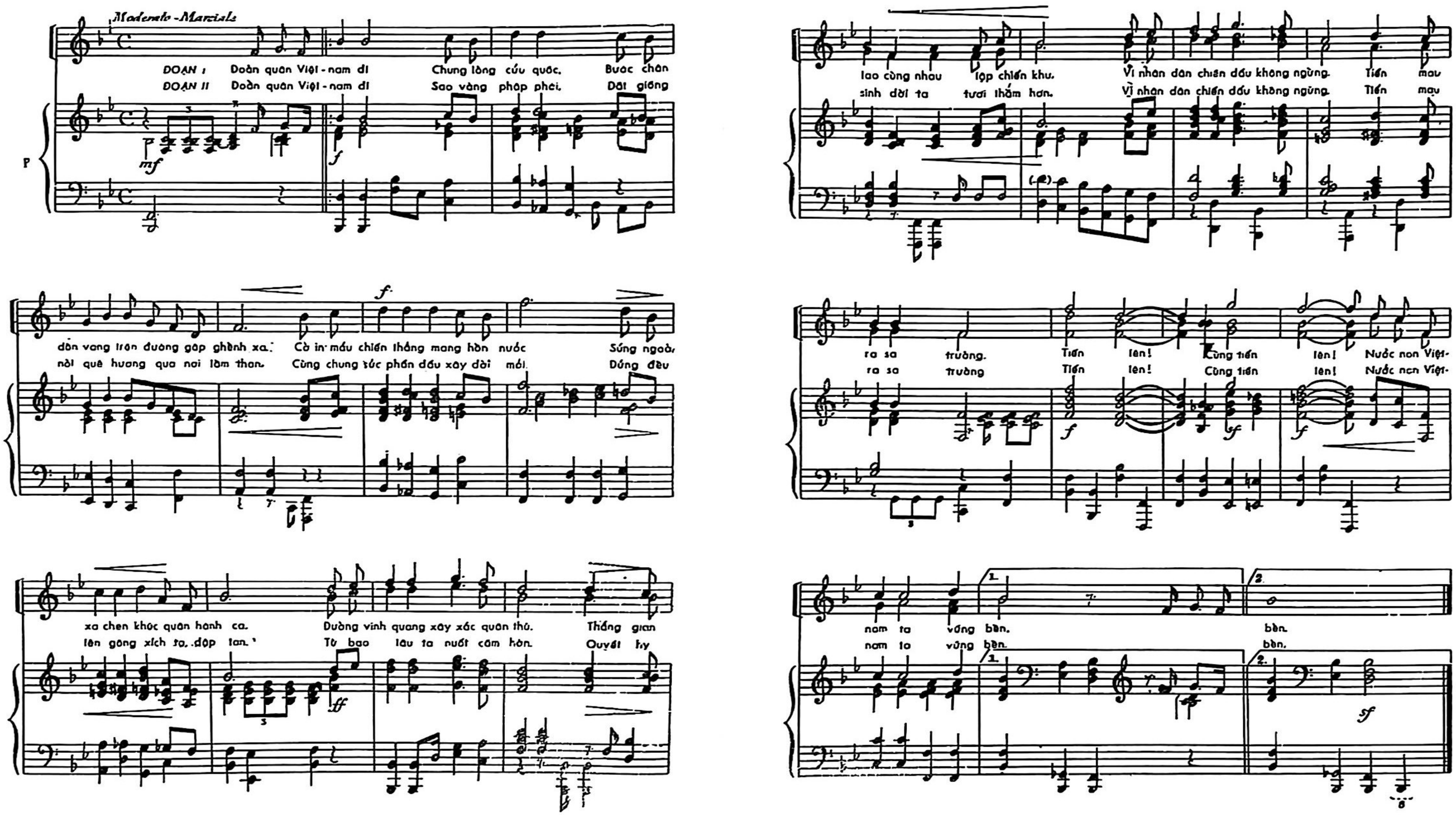
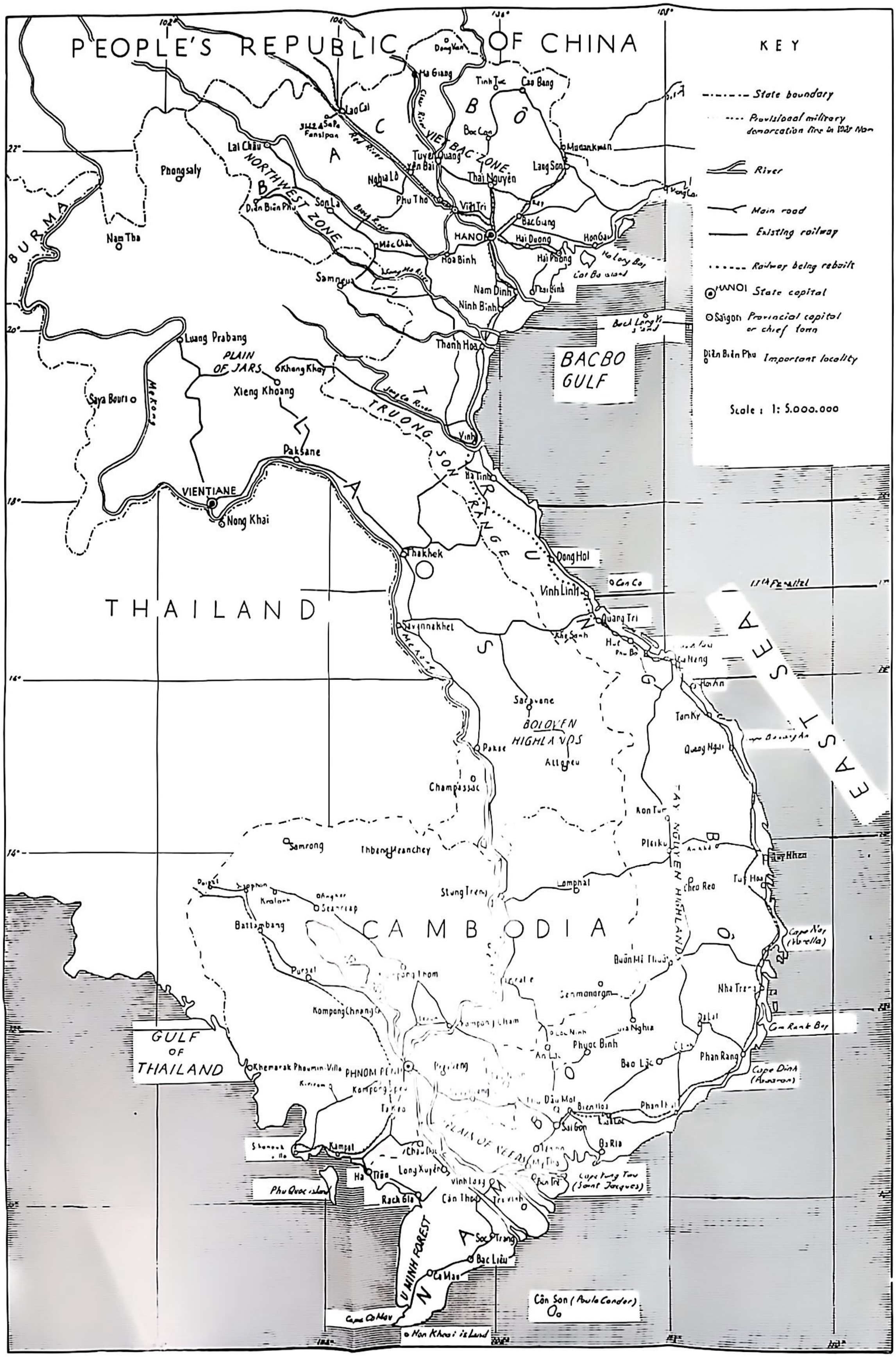
NATIONAL ANTHEM

NATIONAL ANTHEM



President Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969)

TON DUC THANG
President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.


PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
KEY
State boundary
Provisional military demarcation line in 1954 Nam
River
Main road
Existing railway
Railway being rebuilt
HANOI State capital
Saigon Provincial capital or chief town
Dien Bien Phu Important locality
Scale : 1: 5.000.000
BACBO GULF
VIET BAC ZONE
NORTHWEST ZONE
TAY NGUYEN HIGHLANDS
TRUONG SON RANGE
BOLOVEN HIGHLANDS
PLAIN OF JARS
PLAIN OF REEDS
BURMA
THAILAND
CAMBODIA
LAOS
GULF OF THAILAND
U MINH FOREST
Phu Quoc island
Con Son (Poulo Condor)
Hon Khoai island
Cape Ca Mau
Cape Varella
Cape Dinh (Avarom)
Cam Ranh Bay
Cape Tung Tau (Saint Jacques)
17th Parallel
Lao Cai
Sapa
Fansipan
Lai Chau
Dien Bien Phu
Son La
Phongsaly
Nam Tha
Luang Prabang
Xieng Khoang
Khang Khay
Saya Bouri
Paksane
VIENTIANE
Nong Khai
Thakhek
Savannakhet
Pakse
Champassak
Samneua
Ha Giang
Cao Bang
Bac Can
Lang Son
Thai Nguyen
Viet Tri
Hoa Binh
Nghia Lo
Phu Tho
Bac Giang
Hai Duong
Hai Phong
Hon Gai
Nam Dinh
Ninh Binh
Thanh Hoa
Vinh
Ha Tinh
Dong Hoi
Vinh Linh
Quang Tri
Hue
Da Nang
Hoi An
Tam Ky
Quang Ngai
Kon Tum
Pleiku
Buon Ma Thuot
Nha Trang
Phan Rang
Phan Thiet
Bien Hoa
Saigon
Vung Tau
Tuy Hoa
Qui Nhon
Cheo Reo
Lomphat
Stung Treng
Samrong
Thbong Khmum
Battambang
Pursat
Kompong Chhnang
Kompong Cham
Phnom Penh
Kompong Speu
Takeo
Kampot
Sihanoukville
Chau Doc
Long Xuyen
Ha Tien
Rach Gia
Can Tho
Vinh Long
Tra Vinh
Soc Trang
Bac Lieu
Ca Mau
Phuoc Binh
Bao Loc
Dalat
Ban Me Thuot
Sen Monorom
Ban Don
Ban Ho
Ban Dong
Ban Ve
Ban Ve Ha
Ban Ve Thuong
Ban Ve Trung
Ban Ve Nam
Ban Ve Dong
Ban Ve Tay
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Ban Ve Ngoc
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Ban Ve Tam
Ban Ve Ngu
Ban Ve Luc
Ban Ve Thuy
Ban Ve Hoang
Ban Ve Kim
Ban Ve Moc
Ban Ve Tho
Ban Ve Hoa
Ban Ve Nhat
Ban Ve Nguyet
Ban Ve Tinh
Ban Ve Thien
Ban Ve Dia
Ban Ve Nhan
Ban Ve Than
Ban Ve Lin

Chapter I

VIET NAM, CROSSROADS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

YING on the eastern seaboard of the Indochinese peninsula and deep-rooted in the Asian continent, Viet Nam leans back against the People's Republic of China in the north, the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia in the west, and looks out on the Pacific Ocean in the east and the south.

Her co-ordinates put her in the centre of Southeast Asia :

Longitude : 102°10 — 109°30 East
Latitude : 8°30 — 23°22 North.

This strategic position accounts in part for the many foreign invasions in her history.

With a total area of 329,600 square kilometres, Viet Nam has the shape of an elongated S, swollen at both ends (maximum breadth: 600 km in Bac Bo)[1], and thin in between (minimum width: 50 km in Trung Bo). 1,650 kilometres separate the northernmost point (on the Chinese border) from the southernmost tip (Cape Ca Mau) as the crow flies.

Tropical and damp

Viet Nam receives each year more than 100 kilocalories of solar radiation per square centimetre.

Annual mean temperature is over 20°C throughout the country, except on the high peaks. It increases as one goes south:

Hanoi 23°4
Hue 25°1
Saigon 26°9

The total of active temperature (above 10°C) is in general over 8,000° (Hanoi: 8,570°). This enables Viet Nam to look green all the year round and grow several crops a year.

Viet Nam is a humid country. On the average, she receives more than 1,500 mm. of rainfall a year in the plains and from 2,000 to 3,000 mm. on the mountains. Yearly mean relative humidity excedds 80 per cent or even 90 per cent in the rainy season and in time of drizzle.

Those features in temperature and humidity shape the face of nature in Viet Nam.

Rivers with an abundant flow make up a dense hydrographic network. The Red River and the Mekong River, the biggest ones, discharge respectively 122.10^9 cubic metres and $1,400.10^9$ cubic metres of water a year. They have only their mouths and part of their sources in Viet Nam. The other rivers are short, owing to the shape of the territory. The soil is rich, humid and red or yellow in colour. In particular, alluvial deposits and soil resulting from the decomposition of basalt are most fertile.

The fauna and flora show great variety and quick growth. Forests cover 43.8 per cent of the territory. Dense tropical forests prevail. Glades and savannas are stunted forms of tropical forests. The fauna is abundant and comprises over 200 species

1. Bac Bo (North), Trung Bo (Centre) and Nam Bo (South) correspond to the French former names of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina

of mammals. Among the big game are the elephant, tiger, panther, bear, gaur, wild buffalo and stag. On the trees live monkeys, gibbons, squirrels... 1,000 species of birds inhabit the forests, some renowned for their plumage: peacocks, pheasants, parrots, others for their song: larks, blackbirds. The seas, rivers, lakes, canals, especially in Nam Bo, swarm with 200 species of fresh-water fish and nearly 800 species of sea fish.

Monsoons, a determining factor of the rhythm of nature

Nowhere else is the monsoon regime so characteristic and so complex as in Viet Nam.

From November to April, cold and dry winds blow from temperate lands (Siberia, China) to North Viet Nam, where they account for a relatively cold winter. Mean temperature of the coldest month (January) falls under 20°C north of the 16th parallel and 18° north of the 18 th parallel. It decreases with the altitude, falling to 8°3 (minimum: — 2°) at Sapa (altitude: 1,570 m.). Frost, hoar-frost and snow appear sometimes in mountain regions. South of the 16 th parallel blows the trade-wind, a tropical regular wind. Here there is no winter. In Saigon, it is hot all the year round. In January, the coolest month, the mean temperature is 25°8 C.

In both North and South Viet Nam it is then the dry season, with about 15 to 20 per cent of the annual rainfall. However, in the North, the action of cold winds brings about drizzle. From a low sky a fine drizzle falls sometimes for weeks on end and the atmosphere is saturated with humidity. In the Centre, the rainy season continues, for the Truong Son Range forms a screen. The rainiest month is November.

From May to October, the summer monsoon, hot and humid, sweeps over the whole of Viet Nam, coming from the southern and eastern seas (Indian and Pacific Oceans). The temperature rises. In July, the average is 28°6 in Hanoi, 28°9 in Hue and 26°7 in Saigon, where the hottest month is April (28°9). Meanwhile the wet season sets in in both the North and the South. Showers and rainstorms release a huge amount of water, sometimes up to 100 mm. in 24 hours. In the Centre, the dry season lasts from February to July.

Thus, everywhere in the country, there are two seasons: a dry and a wet season. In the North, the dry season is also the cool one.

From July to November, the North and the Centre are often affected by typhoons. Brewing in the Pacific Ocean or even in the

Eastern Sea (South China Sea), these tropical cyclones often cause heavy damage, what with the violence of the wind (up to 200 km/hour) and that of the rain (up to 500 mm. of rainfall).

The alternation of dry and wet, hot and cool seasons regulates the regime of water, animal and vegetal life, and the crops.

The dry season is that of low water, the rivers flow in their lesser beds, uncovering sand shoals. When comes the rainy season, they swell and their beds widen. As regards the Red River, the difference between the low-water mark (2.80m) and the high-water mark (9 m) is 6.20 m in Hanoi on the average and exceeds 10 m in some other places.

During the cool season, some species of trees lose their foliage, some tropical animals hibernate and some birds from temperate zones migrate to Viet Nam. In the North, some kinds of vegetables and fruit-trees of temperate climates can be grown.

The monsoon regime is irregular and causes substantial changes in the climate. Sometimes the North has a harsh winter (minimum temperature in Hanoi: 2°7). In certain years, drought drags on while in others overabundant rains cause floods. In 1945, the Red River rises to 14.1 m.

A diversified relief with varied landscapes

Nearly four-fifths of Vietnamese territory is covered with mountains and hills.

The relief is relatively low, the mountains over 1,000 m accounting only for 10 per cent of the territory (highest peak: Fansipan 3,142 m). But it is quite uneven and interspersed with deep valleys.

Stretching over 1,400 km from North to South, the mountain system runs from the Northwestern border to Eastern Nam Bo.

North of the Red River, the mountains are disposed in concentric arcs. South of this river, they spread from the northwest to the southeast down to the Ca River, and then on to the coast where they fall steeply into the sea. There begins the Truong Son Range. From the right bank of the Ca River to beyond the Clouds' Pass their direction remains northwest-southeast. From there, they run north-south, then northeast-southwest to form a big arc the convex side of which is turned to the Pacific. Their western slopes fall in gentle declivity towards the Mekong River. On Vietnamese territory they make up the Tay Nguyen high plateaux whose basalt has decomposed into so-called red soil.

These changes in orientation and consequently in exposure to the monsoons bring about differences in temperature and rainfall.

Slopes exposed to the winter monsoon are colder. Valleys are drier and subject to greater daily differences of temperature. As temperature decreases with altitude and rainfall increases, zones take shape. Over 1,000 m., subtropical and temperate vegetation appears and develops. Therefore one has in Viet Nam natural regions according to relief and altitude.

There is a marked contrast between the plains and the mountain regions. Alluvial plains, flat and low, stand sometimes only a few metres above sea level. To protect itself against floods, tides and waves, the population has to build dykes. The dyke network in the Bac Bo delta is a characteristic feature of the Vietnamese civilization.

The coast, long and varied in orientation and structure, adds to the diversity of nature. The flat sea-shore from Haiphong to Qui Nhon and from Cape Dinh to Ha Tien teems with fish and affords picturesque beaches. The steep portions, those between Capes Nay and Dinh in the first place, shelter deep and secure bays where good harbours can be laid out, like that of Cam Ranh.

Viet Nam's continental shelf is broad and shallow, except along the southwest of Trung Bo. The regime of tides is complex: the tide rises once a day in the Bac Bo Gulf, twice along the Nam Bo coast, once or twice along the Trung Bo coast. Many offshore islands (Cat Ba, Phu Quoc...) and archipelagoes dot the coast. The calcareous rocks of Ha Long Bay form a site of imposing beauty.

With such varied landscapes Viet Nam abounds in natural resources.

Her subsoil contains many kinds of ores; some deposits are rich and easy to exploit. Let us mention in particular coal, iron, aluminium, tin and other metals, apatite... Recent prospectings suggest the presence of oil.

The fertile soil yields important agricultural and forestry products. Apart from rice, which takes pride of place among the food crops, maize, sweet potatoes, manioc, pea-nuts, soya are grown. Industrial crops are also abundant: rubber, lacquer, coffee, tea, tobacco, cotton, coconut, sugar cane, jute, etc. So are tropical, subtropical and temperate fruits: banana, longan, letchi, mango, mangosteen, pine-apple, orange, tangerine, plum, pear, peach...

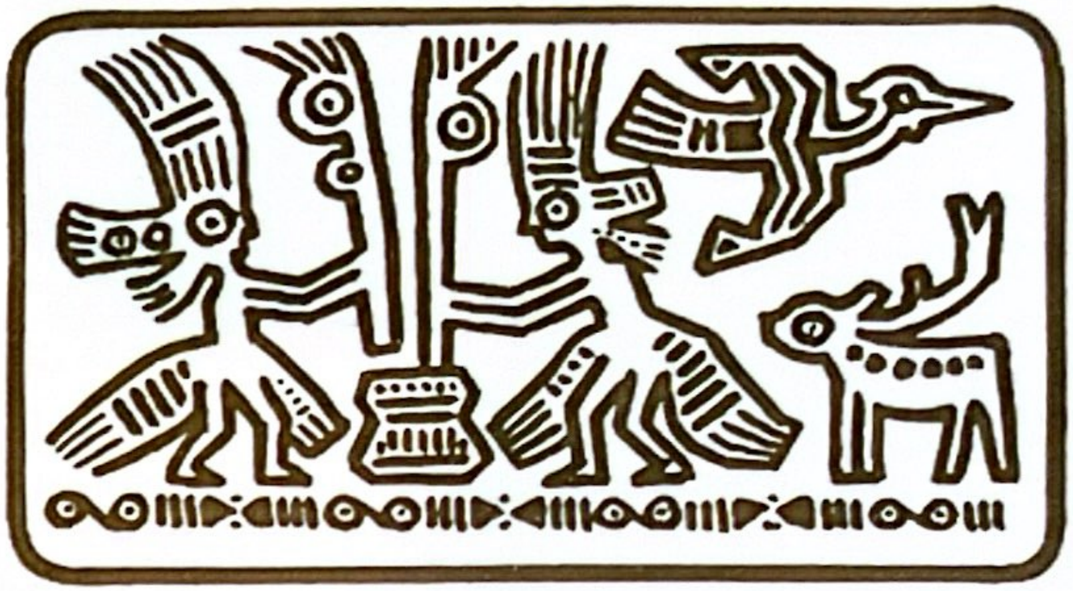
The forests contain valuable species: *lim, gu, tau,* excellent for timber, *lat hoa*, much appreciated in cabinet-making, and oil- or resin-bearing trees and medicinal plants.

Animal husbandry is thriving: buffalo, ox, pig, poultry, etc. Fish and marine products like salt constitute inexhaustible resources.

Numbering about 35 million (North and South), the Vietnamese population is composed of over 60 nationalities. The Viet or Kinh who make up the major part, the Tay, Muong, Thai, Nung, Meo, Zao in the North, E-de, Ba-na, Gia-lai in Tay Nguyen, Cham in South Trung Bo, Khmer in Nam Bo...

For many centuries, these nationalities have formed an integral part of the nation. Suffice it to recall that the Viet Bac autonomous zone in the North, predominantly populated with ethnic minorities, was a base of the Vietnamese revolution, the cradle of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The Dien Bien Phu victory was won in Thai country.

And at present, the combined efforts of all, from the North to the South, from the mountains to the deltas in the war of resistance against US aggression, have been recognized by all impartial observers as unquestionable evidence of the perfect cohesion of the Vietnamese people.



Chapter II

A MILLENARY HISTORY

The origins

ARCHAEOLOGICAL researches have of late shed a new light on the beginnings of Viet Nam's history.

In August 1965, Vietnamese archaeologists discovered in a cave at Tan Van (Lang Son province) the remains of an anthropian and the teeth of another, akin to the sinanthropus. Initial examinations trace their appearance to the Pleistocene period, about 500,000 years ago.

Excavations in November 1960 at Nui Do (Thanh Hoa province) unearthed thousands of stone splinters, among them almond-shaped hand axes, carefully hewn on both sides, typical of the Chellean period. Thus is confirmed the existence of the Lower Paleolithic in Viet Nam.

In caves in Hoa Binh and Bac Son there have been discovered many seats of lithic culture with implements, daily use articles, food remains, particularly shells and bones. The tools are of roughhewn stone, ellipse-, disc- or almond- shaped knives, scrapers, rectangular axes. Food gathering and hunting constituted the main activities. The was no trace of agricuture as yet. During the same period, in the coastal regions of Trung Bo, man lived on fishing. Remains of shells of molluscs which had been used for food were piled 5-6 metres high over thousands of square metres.

By the third millenary B.C., deltas and coastal plains appeared roughly as they do now. Many neolithic centres flourished along the Trung Bo littoral, in Ha Long Bay and many caves and other sites in Tay Nguyen and Eastern Nam Bo. A series of neolithic sites has just been discovered along the Red River, from Phu Tho province to the outskirts of Hanoi. Recent excavations have shown that the area of extension of the neolithic culture mainly includes the present midlands north of the Red River, where the origins of the Vietnamese nation are traced. That is the *Phung Nguyen* civilization. Stone implements are well polished, done in regular geometrical shapes with various patterns and sizes, and often fitted with handles. Man already knew how to make rings, bracelets, ear-rings, beads from bone, horn and stone. The art of pottery-making reached a high level. The appearance of agriculture and stock-breeding is confirmed by the discovery of hoes, great terra-cotta jars used to keep cereals, and pig and buffalo bones.

By the end of the 2nd millenary B.C., copper and especially bronze made their appearance.

Western archaeologists have named that bronze civilization *Dong Son*, after the first site of some importance discovered in Thanh Hoa province.

Dong Son represents an advanced stage of the bronze civilization. In fact, the first copper then bronze objects had appeared beside implements of hewn stone and neolithic pottery. The quality of the bronze and the shapes were gradually improved and resulted in the remarkable Dong Son creations.

Recent archaeological findings suggest that in Viet Nam the bronze age appeared on the basis of neolithic industry. Although this long evolution had been marked with external contributions, they did not constitute the decisive element. The bronze art was widely disseminated in Viet Nam and the sites discovered these last years have revealed an extremely original unity of civilization.

Most remarkable are the bronze drums bearing decorative designs both realistic and very stylized which show their authors' high artistic level.

Bronze ploughshares, bill-hook and sickle blades testify to the development of agriculture. River and sea-fishing were extensively practised. Handicrafts, pottery, bronze casting began to separate from agriculture.

The bronze age corresponds in Viet Nam's ancient history to the period of the *Van Lang* state, constituted by a federation of fifteen tribes.

The Hung kings governed through the agency of *lac hau* (civilian chiefs), *lac tuong* (military chiefs) and subaltern functionaries, *bo chinh*. The capital was established in Me Linh, now in Vinh Phu province. Thus an aristocracy was created while primitive communes still subsisted.

Towards the end of the third century B.C., when Van Lang society was in full evolution, Thuc Phan, king of Nam Cuong (now roughly the province of Cao Bang and part of the Chinese province of Kwangsi) seized hold of Van Lang to found *Au Lac*.

He proclaimed himself king under the name of An Zuong Vuong and established his capital at Co Loa. At present, one can find near Hanoi remains of the spiral-shaped citadel, the external rampart of which measures about 8,000 m. Nearly 10,000 bronze arrow-heads were discovered there in 1959. An Zuong Vuong had a standing army equipped with crossbows which released ten bronze-tipped arrows at a time.

The Au Lac kingdom victoriously resisted the troops sent by the Chinese Tsin dynasty, towards the end of the third century B.C. But in 180 B.C. Tchao To, a Chinese general who had carved out a territory for himself in South China, annexed Au Lac. However, his successors could not hold out against the powerful armies of the Han.

In 111 B.C. Viet Nam fell under the domination of Chinese feudal dynasties.

Thus by the end of the first millenary B.C. there had been constituted an original and vigorous civilization, particularly in

the deltas and neighbouring regions, which was to undergo a decisive trial : confrontation with Chinese feudal expansion. But, far from letting itself be assimilated, it managed after a long resistance to become an independent national culture. That is the best proof of its vigour and originality.

The long march towards independence

The ten centuries of Chinese domination were ten centuries of heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people.

In the year 40 the first major uprising broke out, led by the two Trung Sisters. They founded a kingdom with Me Linh as capital and managed to preserve the reconquered independence for over three years. But they were at last defeated by superior numbers. Ever since then their memory as national heroines has been maintained.

History and the popular mind also preserve the memory of Lady Trieu, an intrepid elephant-riding warrior who fought against the invaders in 248. The primary cause of those frequent revolts was the oppression and exploitation of the people by the Chinese feudal rulers.

Along with the economic and political struggle against the occupier on the one hand and the development of agriculture and handicrafts on the other, a sense of national awareness took shape which lent the insurrections increased scope and brought them to a higher organizational level.

Ly Bon succeeded in overthrowing the Chinese yoke and founding in 542 an independent state called *Van Xuan* which lasted 58 years. The country again underwent a period of Chinese feudal domination marked with the big uprisings of Mai Thuc Loan (722) and Phung Hung (791).

The end of the ninth century brought a period of protracted insurrection which led to the seizure of power by Khuc Thua Zu in 905. A brilliant naval victory was won by Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang River in 938. The next year, he proclaimed himself king and established his capital at Co Loa. Viet Nam had definitively wrested back her independence.[1]

1. It should be noted that each time the Chinese imperial dynasties were shaken by peasant insurrections the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle enjoyed favourable conditions. An objective unconscious solidarity was thus established between the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples.

A centralized feudal state (1010-1400)

All tendencies towards feudal parcellings as well as all attempts at reconquest by Chinese feudalists were shattered one after another by the various dynasties which reigned from 939 to 1010, when the Ly royal dynasty came to power (1010-1225).

In 1010, the Ly transferred their capital to Thang Long, on the present site of Hanoi.

The Ly were succeeded by the Tran.

During four centuries, these two great dynasties gave Viet Nam a new face, that of a centralized monarchy, an independent state having a specific national culture.

In 1075, in anticipation of an imminent attack by the Sung, Ly Thuong Kiet, an able general of the Ly, launched 100,000 troops against Kwangtung and Kwangsi and destroyed military bases there before withdrawing. The next year, he broke a big attack waged by over 100,000 men and 10,000 cavalrymen of the Sung Court.

The decisive trial took place in the 13th century with the attempts at conquest by the powerful Mongol army of Kubilai, Gengis Khan's grandson, who tried to annex Viet Nam after conquering China and a sizable part of Europe.

The first Mongol attack took place in 1258. The invaders reached Thang Long but were rapidly repelled. In 1285, mobilizing 500,000 troops, Kubilai launched his army under his son Toghan's command against Viet Nam. The Mongols occupied a big part of the country, including the capital. But the resistance organized by general Tran Hung Dao, combining harassment with large-scale operations, inflicted a series of defeats upon the invaders. Toghan had a narrow escape by hiding in a bronze cylinder. A new Mongol offensive in 1287 ended in 1288 with a naval disaster on the Bach Dang River where 500 armed junks were destroyed or seized by the Vietnamese forces. The Mongol Emperors then gave up all attempts at conquest.

The Tran strategists, particularly the Commander-in-Chief Tran Hung Dao, had succeeded on the political plane in bringing about the union of all social strata, and on the military plane had adopted a strategy and tactics suited for a resistance with broad popular participation.

This victory was also due to the solidity of the socio-economic regime.

After the regaining of independence, the royal dynasties succeeded in developing agriculture through large-scale hydraulic

works. Thus the network of dykes and irrigation canals was markedly improved and their maintenance required the centralization of power, the elimination of tendencies towards parcelling, the setting up of a mandarin bureaucracy. Handicrafts developed, turning out fine ceramics and valuable cloths.

The development of the Buddhist cult accounted for the building of many pagodas with an original architecture. In 1070 the Literature Temple was erected in Hanoi and dedicated to Confucius. A national literature burgeoned. Completing an already rich oral folk literature, it was marked at the beginning with patriotic poems, historical works and poetry of Buddhist inspiration. Official documents and classical literary works were written in classical Chinese [1]. But in the 13th century began to appear works in *nôm*, a script derived from the Chinese ideograms and used to transcribe the Vietnamese language.

After exhausting its dynamism the Ly-Tran regime was torn by agrarian contradictions : rebellion of serfs in big estates, struggle between the nobility holding fiefs and latifundia and the class of peasant owners representing a more advanced economy. Serfs and peasants mobilized en masse against foreign invasion or for big hydraulic works demanded their due, while the mandarin bureaucracy recruited by examination tried to contend with the nobility for high administrative functions.

A crisis broke out towards the end of the 14th century. In 1400, Ho Quy Ly seized power. He put forward a series of economic, social and cultural reforms. These aimed less at suppressing the latifundia-holding aristocracy than at limiting its power. The liberation of serfs and domestic slaves was only half accomplished. Despite his great talent Ho Quy Ly failed.

The apogee of the feudal regime

(15th-early 16th century)

Capitalizing on the Vietnamese crisis, the Chinese Ming dynasty which had driven out the Mongols despatched a big army to Viet Nam in 1406 and captured the Ho king in 1407.

The Ming tried to set up a direct administration, took radical measures to try and root out all national culture and consciousness, and bled the country white.

This time it was a farmer, Le Loi, who raised the standard of revolt.

1. Used in Eastern Asia in the same way as Latin in medieval Europe.

In 1418, leaving his native Lam Son, he created a first resistance base in the mountainous part of Thanh Hoa province. Faced with many popular uprisings in other provinces, the Ming were unable to liquidate this base. Le Loi was helped by Nguyen Trai who was at the same time a great strategist, a prominent public figure, a talented writer and poet, and an encyclopaedic mind. He gradually enlarged the resistance base, built an army, gathered many devoted companions and liberated many provinces. In 1426, the Ming sent to Viet Nam 50,000 men as reinforcements. In 1427, another expeditionary corps, 150,000 strong, was wiped out at Chi Lang (in present-day Lang Son province). The Ming troops withdrew the same year.

With Nguyen Trai, the resistance took on aspects of a people's war : it essentially relied on the peasants, used most varied forms of struggle and combined armed struggle with political propaganda among enemy troops.

Once independence was regained, the Le dynasty thoroughly modified the socio-economic structure of the country. Juridically, the king remained the owner of all lands and continued to distribute estates to high dignitaries. But these estates were no longer hereditary and the peasants working on them were freed from serfdom and had only to pay rents. The landed aristocracy thus gave way to a new class of landowners.

In the king's name, the mandarin bureaucracy administered the country. The Hong Duc code was enacted, with progressive aspects, e.g. concerning the women's rights. Confucian doctrine became the official ideology of the regime. Education, organized by both the state and individual families, made big headway. Literature blossomed. Works written in *nôm* began to win prominence. Among them was Nguyen Trai's contribution : poems, political and military writings and a book on geography.

In 1471, the Le king brought the southern borders of Viet Nam down to present-day Phu Yen province (South Viet Nam).

The crisis of feudalism

The Vietnamese feudal monarchy reached its apogee by the middle of the fifteenth century. New contradictions appeared which undermined it and by the end of the 15th century brought about a stormy period marked with a general crisis of feudalism and many peasant insurrections.

In 1527, the Mac family usurped power. The Le took refuge in the southern provinces, helped by the Nguyen and Trinh lords.

In 1591, a victorious counter-offensive by a Trinh drove the Mac from the capital and re-enthroned a Le king. Effective power fell into the hands of the Trinh. As early as 1558, a Nguyen, appointed governor of Thuan-Quang provinces (Huê and other provinces further south) had set up there an autonomous administration. Both the Trinh and Nguyen families, who reigned each on a part of the country, claimed to govern in the name of the Le family, still the symbol of Viet Nam's unity, and did not give up their design on the whole country. From 1627 to 1672, they fiercely fought each other. Then the equilibrium of forces caused them to settle down on either side of a demarcation line, the Gianh River in Quang Binh province. Turning the truces to account, the Nguyen pushed south in the direction of the Dong Nai and the Mekong Rivers. Their principality reached the Gulf of Siam in 1708. The Saigon region was occupied late in the 17th century.

This deep crisis of feudalism did not prevent handicrafts and trade from developing. Many mines of copper, zinc and tin were exploited. Internal trade extended. External trade displayed some progress since the 17th century in urban centres opened to boats coming from China, Japan, Indonesia and more and more from the West.

However, the development of handicrafts and trade was greatly hampered by the policy of compression of the feudal bureaucracy. Mercantile economy could not develop. The embryonic bourgeoisie was nipped in the bud, while the growing appropriation of lands by landlords and the continual wars drove the peasants into utter misery.

Peasant insurrections and the Tay Son movement

All those contradictions broke out in the open in the 18th century. The Trinh had to take a series of repressive measures against peasant uprisings which reached their apex after 1730.

The great movement which was to dominate the end of the century was that led by the Tay Son brothers. By a series of successful campaigns from 1771 to 1786, Nguyen Huê, the most brilliant of the three brothers, rapidly did away with the armies of the Nguyen, then those of the Trinh, expelling those two families who had reigned for three centuries and reunifying the country.

In the South, an offspring of the Nguyen, Nguyen Anh, called on the Siamese troops to intervene. In 1785, in a resounding

river battle, Nguyen Hue defeated 50,000 Siamese sailing 300 war junks on a branch of the Mekong.

Taking advantage of the situation, the Chinese Ching dynasty despatched 200,000 men to occupy Thang Long in 1788. Starting from Central Viet Nam, Nguyen Hue marched his troops over 600 km in ten days, Swooping on the enemy, he took within five days many fortified posts which defended Thang Long then captured the capital. The enemy was routed. That was one of the most brilliant victories in Viet Nam's history (1789).

The nature of the Tay Son movement itself explained the power of its armed forces. A popular movement, it crystallized the most profound claims and aspirations of the peasant masses exacerbated by several centuries of feudal oppression. Many merchants also joined the Tay Son.

However, Nguyen Huê's premature death in 1792 stopped the growth of the movement.

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The eighteenth century will remain a great century of Vietnamese culture.

For the first time, literature in *nôm*, i.e. in the national and popular language, took precedence over that written in classical Chinese. The first novels in verse appeared which gradually penetrated the masses. This literature contrasted with that of the past centuries by its content. Poetess Ho Xuan Huong castigated scholars, mandarins, bonzes and demanded the right to equality for the women. Nguyen Du (1765-1820) is the greatest name of Vietnamese classical literature. In his masterpiece, *Kieu*, the poet dealt with the theme of a talented and beautiful girl victim of a corrupt society, and painted a vast fresco of the Vietnamese society of his time.

Scientific culture also knew a great development. Particular mention should be made of the medical treatises of Le Huu Trac, alias Lan Ong, and the encyclopaedic writings of Le Quy Don, poet, historian and geographer.

The betrayal of the feudalists

The feudal counter-offensive waged by Nguyen Anh, favoured by the internal weaknesses of the Tay Son movement after Nguyen Huê's death, ended in 1802 with the founding of the

Nguyen dynasty. Nguyen Anh proclaimed himself emperor under the name of Gia Long and transferred his capital to Hue.

The feudal regime was restored in complete rigour in the economic, social and ideological fields. The Gia Long code, enacted in the 19th century, marked a step back compared with the Hong Duc code.

In the North as in the South, Gia Long and his successors had to cope with many peasant uprisings while European capitalism began to make inroads.

Some clearsighted minds proposed reforms, the adoption of Western science and technique. But the king and the ignorant high-ranking mandarins saw no further than their privileges.

The French attack, which started with a number of provocations, found a flabby monarchy, with spineless high-ranking mandarins hated by the people. Da Nang was attacked in 1858 and Saigon occupied in 1859. From capitulation to capitulation, the Court ended in complete submission and accepted French protectorate in 1884.

The deep cause of this policy of surrender by the Nguyen monarchy lay in its inability to rely on the people to resist the invader. Eventually, in order to safeguard their privileges, the king and the high dignitaries of the Court put the feudal administrative machinery at the service of the colonial conqueror.

However, despite the submission of the monarchy, all the strata of the population vigorously reacted against the foreign invasion. Flouting the cease-fire order of the Court, as early as 1860, ordinary people, scholars, and a few patriotic mandarins organized a popular resistance which considerably delayed the French conquest.

Even after the complete capitulation of the Court, popular resistance continued, led mainly by patriotic scholars or ordinary people.

Nevertheless, the resistance lacked weapons, and, above all, an organization, a programme of action that could mobilize the latent forces of the nation against a better-armed and most Machiavellian enemy.

The restoration of the monarchy and of Confucianism advocated by the leaders could not raise much enthusiasm among the peasants and the youth. All these weaknesses explained why those many movements were ruthlessly repressed. By 1900 armed resistance had practically ceased except in the Yen The mountain range where Hoang Hoa Tham held out until 1913.

The Vietnamese people still keep the memory of the heroes of the 1860-1900 period: Truong Dinh, Nguyen Trung Truc, Phan Dinh Phung, Tan Thuat, Hoang Hoa Tham, to mention only the most famous.

The contradictions of the colonial regime

After 1900, the colonial regime settled down to a relatively long period of exploitation and investment.

We will not describe in detail the well-known characters of this colonial economy built for the only profit of metropolitan capitalism, an unbalanced and lopsided economy, laid on a feudal system with nearly unchanged structures. For while the colonial administration needed mandarins and headmen to collect taxes and hound patriots down to the village level, the mandarins, headmen and landlords needed French bayonets to maintain their privileges.

Thus a line was gradually drawn which separated the colonialists allied to the compradors and the feudalists from the other strata of the population who aspired to independence and social renovation.

This colonial and semi-feudal society was continually shaken by an uninterrupted succession of movements and uprisings in spite of brutal repression.

The bourgeois democratic ideology was the first to bring a new ferment into traditional Vietnamese society. Industrialists and traders yearned to develop a national industry and trade, while intellectuals, among them a renowned scholar called Phan Boi Chau, dreamed of setting up a parliamentary republic or at least a constitutionalist monarchy. A fraction of the petty bourgeoisie adopted their views. During many years, before and after the First World War, associations, groups and parties were founded in pursuit of these aims. Now and then an uprising or a mutiny of native soldiers reminded one that the agitation went on.

The Viet Nam Quoc Zan Dang, led by a patriot, Nguyen Thai Hoc, was the most important of those parties in 1928-1929. In February 1930, the party launched an armed insurrection at Yen Bai. However, the movement was rapidly subdued.

The repeated failures of parties and groups with a bourgeois tendency showed that in face of imperialism, a powerful and experienced enemy, the Vietnamese revolution had to seek another path if it was to triumph.

National liberation and social progress

That trail was blazed by Nguyen Ai Quoc, who was to become President Ho Chi Minh, and by the party which he founded in 1930, the Indochinese Communist Party. New principles and new methods of action appeared in the Vietnamese national movement. Marxism-Leninism threw a vivid light on national problems, on the nature of imperialism, on the strategy and tactics to follow to win national independence. For the first time in Viet Nam's history, it forcefully and clearly raised the agrarian problem. For the first time also, it clearly outlined the shape of future society.

With the appearance of the Communist Party, workers' demonstrations, peasant movements, intellectuals' claims took on another aspect and acquired the scope of mass movements. As early as 1930, big strikes and peasant demonstrations broke out, the economic crisis having begun to further deteriorate the already appalling living conditions of the masses. In several districts of Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces poor peasants' committees distributed land and set up people's power (Nghe-Tinh soviets). Peasant insurrections in Quang Ngai province, important strikes in rubber plantations, Saigon enterprises, Hong Gai coal-mines and at the Nam Dinh cotton-mill, together with peasant demonstrations in the west of the Mekong delta marked the '30's, the year of economic crisis. Repression was fierce; the colonial administration even sent planes to obliterate whole villages. The movement subsided in 1931, but soon surged up again, starting from 1935. Thanks to an organization deeply implanted in the popular masses, with the setting up of the *Front populaire* in France in 1936, a new revolutionary wave swept over Viet Nam, this time under the sign of legality and in various forms. The Party, however, maintained its clandestine network.

The struggle kept on mounting after the Second World War broke out, especially after the surrender of the French army in France itself and the entry of Japanese troops into Indochina. Armed insurrections flared up: Bac Son (September 1940), Nam Ky (November 1940).

In 1941, Ho Chi Minh returned home to take in hand the direct leadership of the revolutionary movement. The Viet Minh Front was founded. A revolutionary base was organized in Viet Bac. The Japanese overthrew the French on March 9, 1945, which gave a new impetus to the movement. A Congress of People's Representatives met at Tan Trao on August 16 and 17, 1945 and decreed general insurrection.

Within ten days, revolutionary power was established throughout the country, from the Chinese border to Cape Ca Mau.

On September 2, 1945, the Provisional Government presented itself before the people in Hanoi. President Ho Chi Minh read the Proclamation of Independence.

The founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam marked the end of the colonial era, the renaissance of Viet Nam as an independent state on the international scene and the beginning of deep social transformations.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the national resistance

Right at its founding the young Republic had to face heavy and complex difficulties.

The famine caused by the French and the Japanese was still rampant. Chiang Kai-shek troops occupied the North of the country down to the 16th parallel. In their wake the French Expeditionary Corps came with the aim of re-establishing colonial domination.

Famine was curbed by boosting production and practising thrift and mutual aid.

A decree in September 1945 abolished the real estate tax in the countryside. A ministerial decision in October reduced the tax on ricefields by 20 per cent, another in November reduced the land rent by 25% and cancelled old debts. An eight-hour working-day was decreed.

In the South, the French colonialists supported by British forces had re-started the hostilities since September 1945. Withdrawing from the towns, the Nam Bo resistance continued with grim determination. After having taken a foothold in Nam Bo the French colonialists landed in the North. Violating the Preliminary Convention of March 6, 1946 and the Modus Vivendi of September 14, 1946, which they had signed with the DRVN Government, they occupied Haiphong, Lang Son (November 1946). In Hanoi, they staged countless provocations, compelling the Vietnamese people to take up arms to safeguard their independence.

On December 19, 1946, the war of resistance was launched on a nation-wide scale.

The French Expeditionary Corps had hoped to control the country within a few months.

However, armed with only rudimentary weapons, the Hanoi armed forces and people pinned down the aggressor in the capital for nearly two months. Everywhere, guerrilla warfare was organized and fighting spread.

On October 7, 1947, the French command mounted a large-scale offensive against Viet Bac, the H.Q. of the resistance forces, in the hope of annihilating them. The operation ended in a serious setback for the French forces. A new phase of the resistance opened, marked by a vigorous check on the expansion of the occupation by French troops.

In September 1950, a campaign was launched by our armed forces to clear the Viet Nam — China border of French troops. From then on, our troops passed everywhere to the offensive.

To help the French colonialists, the American imperialists stepped up their intervention. They supplied a major part of the war expenditure, supervised all military plans and implanted a military mission, the MAAG, in Saigon.

In 1953, the popular campaign for land reform instilled new enthusiasm into the peasantry and the army, 90 per cent of which being peasants.

During the winter of 1953, General Navarre, Commander-in-Chief of the French expeditionary corps tried to regain the initiative by concentrating 112 battalions in Bac Bo. On November 20, 1953, he dropped six battalions into Dien Bien Phu, which was to serve as a big trap into which to lure our forces.

Dien Bien Phu was turned into a powerful entrenched camp with 49 strong points, 10 km long and over 5 km wide, held by 16,000 crack French troops equipped with US weapons.

Our armed forces were determined to win victory. Hundreds of thousands of volunteer carriers supplied the front with food and munitions. Day and night they helped the army build roads across the jungle to enable it to bring in artillery. By launching offensives in many widely distant regions the Vietnamese command compelled Navarre to disperse his forces over the whole of Indochina while guerilla warfare developed in the enemy's rear area. The French command had lost all strategic initiative.

Dien Bien Phu fell into our hands on May 7, 1954 after 56 days of fighting.

16,000 enemy troops had been put out of action, 62 planes downed, all weapons and equipment captured by our forces. The entire command and staff was captured : one general, 360 officers including 16 colonels, and 1,396 non-commissioned officers.

In coordination with the main front, the people's army and the guerillas attacked and won victory after victory. Vast areas were liberated in the Bac Bo delta, in the provinces of Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Thua Thien, the southern provinces of Trung Bo and in Nam Bo.

The brilliant victory of Dien Bien Phu forced the French government to sign the Geneva Agreements on July 20, 1954, in spite of US attempts at prolonging and extending the conflict.

(Vietnamese history since 1954 will be dealt with in another chapter).

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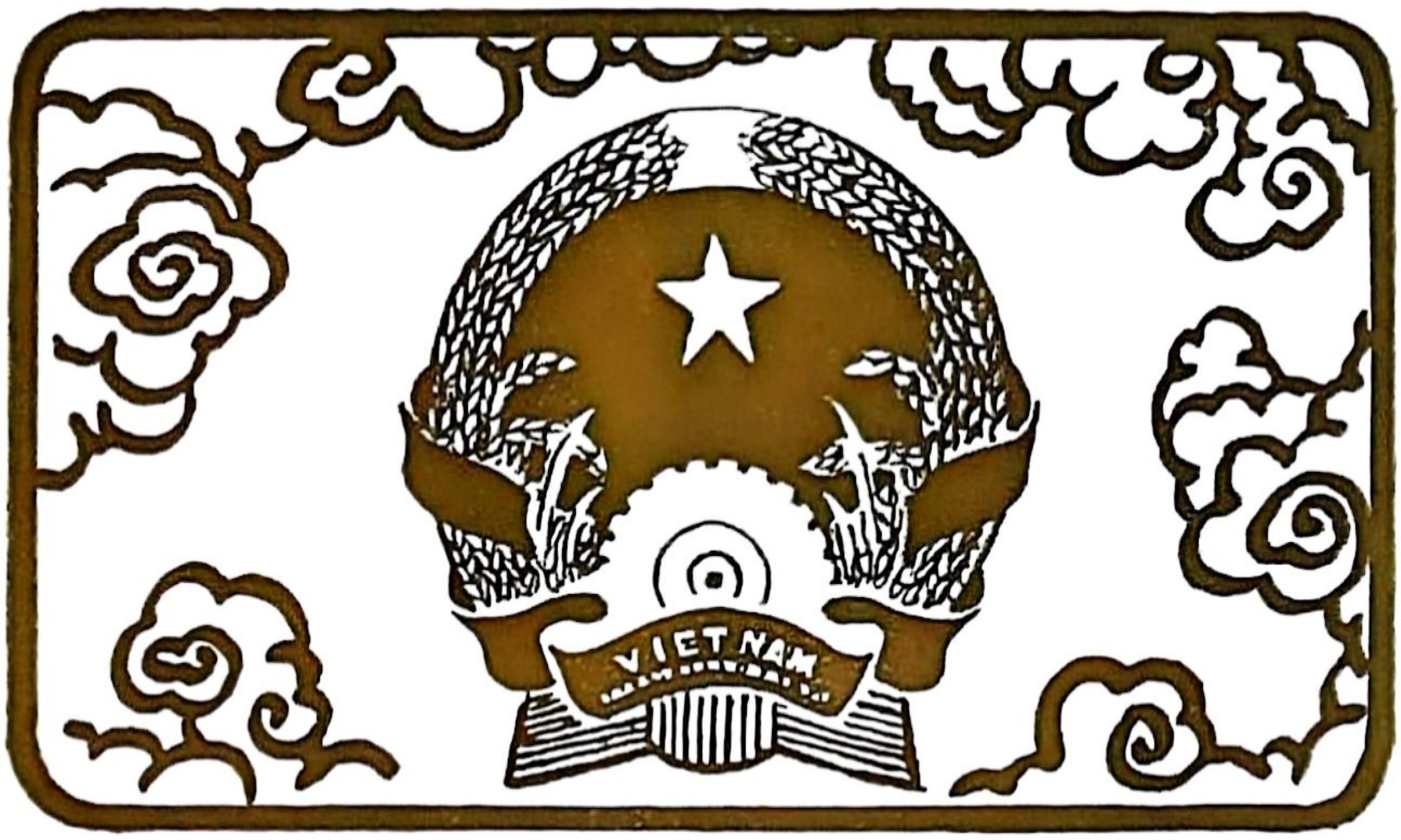
Right from the beginning, the Vietnamese people, by dint of hard work and a close-knit collective organization, had conquered little by little the land on which they lived.

They untiringly fought floods, droughts, typhoons and shaped the land with their unstinted labour.

They had also to defend their land against many foreign aggressions.

In this double struggle against nature and invasions, the people in the deltas and in the mountains, those in the North and in the South, have joined their efforts.

Thus the Vietnamese nation had gradually taken shape with its well-defined territory, its own language, its specific culture and especially its thousands-of-years-old history, all these factors ensuring a strong national cohesion.



Chapter III

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

I. PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC STATE

THE August 1945 Revolution overthrew the colonialist and feudalist regime and founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

This is the first people's democratic State in the history of Viet Nam. For the first time, the Vietnamese people have become masters of their country and their destiny.

There are representatives of people of various strata in the organs of central and local power : workers, peasants, intellectuals,

democratic personalities, patriotic and progressive bourgeois, representatives of political parties, religions, etc. This is the State of the union of the people based on the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class.

The 1959 Constitution stipulates: "All power in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam belongs to the people. The people exercise power through the National Assembly and the People's Councils at all levels, elected by them and responsible to them."

The people, masters of the State, elect the National Assembly and the People's Councils, and through them manage State affairs at both national and local levels. The suffrage is universal, equal, direct and secret. The members of the National Assembly and the members of People's Councils can be dismissed by their electors before the expiration of their mandate if they prove unworthy of the confidence of the people. The 1959 Constitution stresses that all State organs must heed the opinions of the people and accept their supervision.

With regard to the people, the State ceaselessly extends the bases of democracy and tries to improve the standard of their material and cultural life. On the other hand, it stiffens its dictatorship over the enemies of the people, the imperialists, the reactionaries and saboteurs, in order to defend efficaciously the rights, freedom and happiness of the people.

Since 1954, the State has fulfilled the historic task of the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to take North Viet Nam to socialism and make it a solid base for the reunification of the country. To this end the State sets itself the following tasks:

— Suppress spies, commandos, bandits and other saboteurs in the pay of the U.S. imperialists; smash all schemes and acts of provocation, aggression and sabotage; organize the national defence forces;

— Carry out socialist transformation of the economy, socialist construction, and bring welfare and happiness to the people;

— Step up socialist revolution in the ideological, cultural and technical fields so as to strengthen the political and ideological unity of the people and to raise their cultural and technical levels;

— Enhance unity among the people on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance;

— Strengthen solidarity with the forces of peace, democracy and socialism in the world.

1. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

This is the supreme organ of State power and the only law-making body. Legislation and control are the main functions of the National Assembly. It is empowered to approve and amend the Constitution; supervise its implementation; pass laws; elect the President and the Vice-President of the Republic; appoint the Prime Minister, Vice-Premiers and other members of the Government Council; appoint the Vice-Chairman and other members of the National Defence Council; elect the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court and the Head of the Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Control; if need be, remove them from their posts; approve the State economic plan; examine and approve the State budget; assess taxes; grant amnesty and decide on problems of war and peace. Besides, the National Assembly can fill any other function it may deem necessary. The National Assembly is elected for four years, but its term of office could be prolonged in time of war by its own decision. It meets twice a year. Its members enjoy parliamentary immunity.

The Standing Committee of the National Assembly

The Standing Committee of the National Assembly is the permanent organ of the National Assembly. Elected by the latter, it reports its work and is responsible to it.

The Standing Committee is empowered to:

— Declare and organize elections to the National Assembly;

— Convene the National Assembly;

— Interpret laws and issue decrees; these must be in conformity with the principles laid down by the law and the Constitution;

— Appoint or dismiss the Deputy Chief Justice and judges of the Supreme People's Court, the Deputy Head and members of the Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Control, the plenipotentiary diplomatic representatives;

— Supervise the work of the Government Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Control;

— Decide on the ratification or denunciation of treaties concluded with foreign countries except when the Standing Committee deems it necessary to submit them to the decision of the National Assembly;

— Grant amnesty ;

— In the interval between two sessions of the National Assembly, decide on the declaration of the state of war in case the country faces invasion.

Besides the above-mentioned powers, the National Assembly can entrust the Standing Committee with any others it deems necessary.

The Commissions of the National Assembly

The National Assembly appoints the Legislative Commission, the Planning and Budgetary Commission and whatever commissions it deems necessary to help it and its Standing Committee. These commissions study bills and other drafts proposed by the National Assembly or its Standing Committee, and report back to them.

2. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam represents the Republic in home and foreign affairs. He is elected by the National Assembly. His tenure of office is the same as that of the National Assembly.

In accordance with decisions of the National Assembly or its Standing Committee, the President promulgates laws and decrees, appoints or dismisses the Prime Minister, Vice-Premiers and other members of the Government Council, the Vice-Chairman and other members of the National Defence Council, receives foreign diplomatic representatives, ratifies treaties concluded with foreign countries, accredits and recalls plenipotentiary diplomatic representatives of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam to foreign countries. He assumes supreme command of the armed forces and holds the chairmanship of the National Defence Council.

3. THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

The Government Council is the Executive of the supreme organ of State power and the highest administrative organ of the Republic.

Appointed by the National Assembly, it is responsible to the latter and must report its work either to it or to its Standing Committee in the intervals between sessions.

It consists of the Prime Minister, the Vice-Premiers, the Ministers, the heads of State organs of ministerial level: the

Director-General of the State Bank ; the Chairmen of the State Planning Committee, the Committee for Nationalities, the Committee for Reunification, etc...

It co-ordinates and directs the work of the Ministries, the State organs of ministerial level, other State organs under its direct authority and the administrative committees at all levels. It executes the State economic plans and budget, undertakes the management of home and foreign trade, cultural and social affairs, home and foreign affairs, nationalities affairs, and directs the build-up of the armed forces.

4. LOCAL POWER

People's Councils

The 1959 Constitution (art. 80) stipulates: "Local people's councils at all levels are the organs of State power in their respective areas."

A law concerning the organization of local power was voted on October 27, 1962, aimed at bringing into full play the creative initiative of local power and encouraging the broad masses of the people to participate in the management of the State.

The people's councils are elected by universal, equal, direct and secret ballot. They deal with important local problems, decide on the orientation and targets of agricultural production, irrigation work, handicrafts, industry, communications and transport, public health and education in their localities. They elect and supervise the administrative committees and people's courts of the same level.

Administrative Committees

The administrative committees are the executive organs of the local people's councils and at the same time the local administrative bodies.

As executive organs of the people's councils, they are entrusted with the tasks of convening the latter regularly, preparing the questions to be debated by them and executing their decisions.

As local administrative bodies, they are in charge of local administrative affairs, organize and direct local economic, cultural, social and military affairs within their competence, see to the implementation of the decisions and instructions of the administrative bodies of higher levels and of the people's councils of the same level.

Autonomous regions

The two autonomous regions: Viet Bac and Tay Bac have the main task of implementing the nationalities policy in their provinces, bringing into play the capabilities of the nationalities in order to step up the development of these regions.

According to the State plans and with due regard to local peculiarities, the autonomous regions decide on the orientation and tasks of their economic and cultural development and help the various provinces set up their economic and cultural plans as well as their budgets and control their execution. According to the law, the people's councils in the autonomous regions may work out regulations on the exercise of their autonomy and on particular problems concerning their regions, which come into force after approval by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly.

Administratives areas

The national territory is divided into provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities which are put directly under the central power. The province is divided into districts, municipalities and towns. The district is divided into villages and townlets.

There are in North Viet Nam at present 2 municipalities run by the central power: Hanoi and Haiphong, and 23 provinces: Quang Ninh, Ha Bac, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Vinh Phu, Ha Tay, Hoa Binh, Hai Hung, Nam Ha, Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, (the Vinh linh zone near the 17th parallel is also regarded as a province); other provinces are part of the autonomous regions: Cao Bang, Lang Son, Bac Thai, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang (Viet Bac autonomous region), Lai Chau, Nghia Lo and Son La (Tay Bac autonomous region).

The municipalities of Nam Dinh, Thai Nguyen, Viet Tri and Vinh are put under the respective provincial administrations.

5. PEOPLE'S COURTS AND PEOPLE'S OFFICES OF SUPERVISION AND CONTROL

People's Courts

The Supreme People's Court, the local people's courts and the military courts are judicial organs. Judges are elected to the people's courts. The Supreme People's Court is responsible and must report its work to the National Assembly or its Standing Committee.

In the people's courts, the people's assessors enjoy the same powers as the judges.

The people's courts are independent and subject only to the law. Hearings are public except in special cases provided by law. The right of defence is guaranteed to the defendants.

All citizens are equal before the law. Members of minority nationalities may use their own languages or scripts in court proceedings.

People's offices of supervision and control

The people's offices of supervision and control supervise the observance of the law by the State organs, civil servants and the citizens in order to see to the strict and uniform implementation of the law and maintain legality. The people's offices of supervision and control are under the exclusive leadership of similar offices of higher levels and of the Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Control.

The Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Control is responsible and must report its work to the National Assembly or its Standing Committee. The local people's and military offices of supervision and control exercise their supervision in the domains fixed by the law.

II. VANGUARD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM

The Vietnamese people are the masters of their country not only in the political field, but also in the economic field after the basic completion of socialist transformation of economic structures.

During the period of transition to socialism, there exist different forms of ownership of the means of production:

State ownership or ownership by the entire people. It includes the State-run economic sector and all the natural resources declared State property by the law, such as mines, rivers, forests, virgin lands, etc.

The State-run economic sector plays the leading role in the national economy and is given priority development by the State.

Co-operative ownership or collective ownership by the toiling masses. The State encourages, leads and helps it to develop.

Ownership by individual workers. It is protected by the law. The State gives guidance and help to these individual workers to improve their techniques and encourages them to join productive co-operatives of their own free consent.

All citizens enjoy the right to ownership of their private properties such as income derived from labour and savings, dwelling-places and other personal belongings as well as the right of inheritance.

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In accordance with the people's democratic character of the State, the only goal of which is to serve the people, the State not only recognizes the fundamental rights of the citizen, but also guarantees the material conditions for him to actually enjoy these rights.

These rights are clearly defined in the 1959 Constitution.

First of all, *the right to work*. The State, thanks to the planned development of the national economy, does its utmost to create more jobs so that every able-bodied man can take part in the building and defence of the country. Unemployment has been practically liquidated. In spite of difficulties, the State always seeks to improve working conditions and the wage and salary system.

The right to leisure is also recognized by the Constitution. An eight-hour working day is applied in all enterprises. Factory and office workers are entitled to social insurance : annual paid leave, free medical care, retirement pension, etc.

The Vietnamese citizen also enjoys the *right to education*. Illiteracy has been eradicated. Great efforts have been made by the Government in the field of education.

Democratic liberties are guaranteed : equality before the law ; the right to sue public servants for any breach of the law and to claim damages ; the right to vote and to stand for election ; freedom of opinion, of the press, of assembly, of association and demonstration ; freedom of conscience, of following or not following any religion, inviolability of the person, inviolability of the home and of the secrecy of correspondence ; freedom of residence and travel, etc.

Equality between the nationalities is affirmed in the first page of the Constitution :

"All the nationalities living on the territory of Viet Nam are equal in rights and duties. The State has the obligation to maintain and develop solidarity among the various nationalities. All acts of discrimination against, or oppression of, any nationality, and all actions aimed at sowing discord among the nationalities are strictly prohibited."

In the mountain areas, the local administration from village level up to autonomous region level is run by representatives of the nationalities. The latter are represented by their deputies to the National Assembly. Thanks to the assistance of the State and of the Kinh (the majority nationality) they have made big progress in all fields.

Equality between man and woman bears a great revolutionary significance. In the former feudal regime, the woman was relegated to the position of slave not only in social life, but also in her own family.

The 1959 Constitution clearly states in its article 24 :

"Women... enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life — political, economic, cultural, social and domestic. They receive equal pay for equal work."

The law on marriage and the family of January 13, 1960, stipulates :

"The State guarantees full and complete implementation of the principles of free marriage, monogamy and equality between men and women, and assures the protection of the rights of women and their offspring, in order to build up happy, democratic and harmonious families, in which prevail solidarity, love and mutual assistance for the progress of all."

The social status of women rises day by day. In recent years, the three responsibilities movement (which calls on women to replace men in production work, to look after the family in their absence, and to serve the front and even join in the fighting in case of need) has further enhanced their new role in society.

With the recognition of these democratic liberties, every citizen can develop his abilities and contribute to the building of the country. Naturally it is strictly forbidden to misuse these rights to harm the interests of the State and the people.

Conscious of his rights, every citizen is also fully aware of his duties to the State and the community : respect for the Constitution and the law ; respect for labour discipline, public order and the rules of social life ; respect for public property, payment of taxes and fulfilment of military duty for the defence of the Fatherland.

III. THE NATIONAL UNITED FRONT

1. The National United Front and Fatherland Front policy

In the struggle for national liberation and in the building of a new society, the Party, right from its birth, has advocated a policy of broad union.

Basing itself on a correct analysis of Vietnamese society, the Party has founded, under its leadership and on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, a national united front consisting of the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie and patriotic personalities.

The Party has constantly worked to consolidate and broaden the front according to the concrete situation and the tasks of each stage of the revolution. It successively founded the Anti-imperialist Front and the Democratic Front (1936-1939), the Viet Minh Front (1941-1951) and the Liên Viêt Front (1946-1955).

This policy of broad union has been one of the fundamental factors of victory for the Vietnamese revolution.

Established in September 1955 after the restoration of peace, the Fatherland Front continues the traditions of the national united front. It has created a broad union of political parties, mass organizations, armed forces, personalities, religions, nationalities, all strata of the people regardless of age and sex, and overseas Vietnamese in order to:

— Consolidate peace, achieve national reunification, bring independence and democracy to the whole country, and build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam in order to contribute to the defence of peace in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the world;

— Foil all schemes of the US imperialists and their henchmen aimed at sabotaging peace, reunification, independence and democracy in Viet Nam (excerpt from the Rules adopted at the National Congress of the National United Front in September 1955).

The worker-peasant alliance serves as the basis of the Front, under the leadership of the working class.

While maintaining their organic independence, the member political parties and mass organizations undertake to work for the realization of the common program of the Front. Democratic discussions, unity of action, friendly co-operation, mutual aid for the progress of all constitute the Front's methods of work.

The Front is the symbol of the political and moral unity of the people, an outstanding feature of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, which American aggression only serves to strengthen.

2. The Viet Nam Workers' Party

It is the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Vietnamese working class. It continues the work of the Indochinese Communist Party founded on February 3, 1930. It is the leading party of the Vietnamese revolution.

It has creatively applied the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism to the realities of Viet Nam and laid down a correct political line for each stage of the revolution. So, it enjoys the absolute confidence of all strata of the people and can gather under its banner all patriotic and progressive forces of the country.

Under its leadership, the revolutionary movement has ceaselessly advanced: the revolutionary tide of 1930-1931 which culminated in the Nghe-Tinh Soviets, the democratic movement from 1936 to 1939, the anti-French and anti-Japanese guerilla war from 1940 to 1945 which resulted in the August 1945 general insurrection and the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. From 1945 to 1954, it organized the resistance against the French colonialists, crowned with the victory of Dien Bien Phu, and succeeded in liberating completely the Northern half of the country. From 1954 onwards, it has led the socialist revolution in the North and a hard and victorious struggle against US aggression for the building of a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic, and prosperous Viet Nam.

The Party is the decisive factor of the political and moral unity of the people of the DRVN. Its clearsighted leadership is the fundamental factor of the successes of the Vietnamese revolution.

The Party's revolutionary cause is closely connected with President Ho Chi Minh's activities.

A great revolutionary, President Ho Chi Minh was the first Vietnamese to become acquainted with Marxism-Leninism and to propagate it to Viet Nam. The Party was founded, organized and trained by him.

A great patriot, he led an untiring struggle during more than half a century for national independence and freedom. He founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the National United Front and the Viet Nam People's Army. He united the Vietnamese people and caused their traditions of bravery, undauntedness and humanity to blossom. Besides, he implanted in them profound sentiments of internationalism. He led the resistance against the French colonialists and was the soul of the resistance against US aggression.

President Ho Chi Minh was also a great internationalist militant. His life was a brilliant example of revolutionary virtues, humanity, modesty and simplicity.

3. Other political parties and mass organizations

The Viet Nam Democratic Party was founded in 1944. "It is a political party representing the progressive trend of the national bourgeoisie, the industrial and commercial bourgeois, and intellectuals having ties with the Party; the Democratic Party sets itself the task of participating in the struggle, following the revolutionary line of the working class and the Viet Nam Workers' Party, to build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam and to contribute to the defence of peace in Southeast Asia and the world." (Excerpt from the Party's Rules adopted at its Third Congress on November 29, 1960).

The Viet Nam Socialist Party was founded in 1946, "grouping all patriotic and progressive intellectuals determined to struggle for peace and socialism. Its goal is to actively contribute to the accomplishment of the national democratic revolution in the whole country, and to the realization of socialism in Viet Nam."

"The Party adopts scientific socialism as its ideological basis and the compass guiding all its activities." (Excerpt from the Party's Rules adopted at its Third Congress on December 28, 1960).

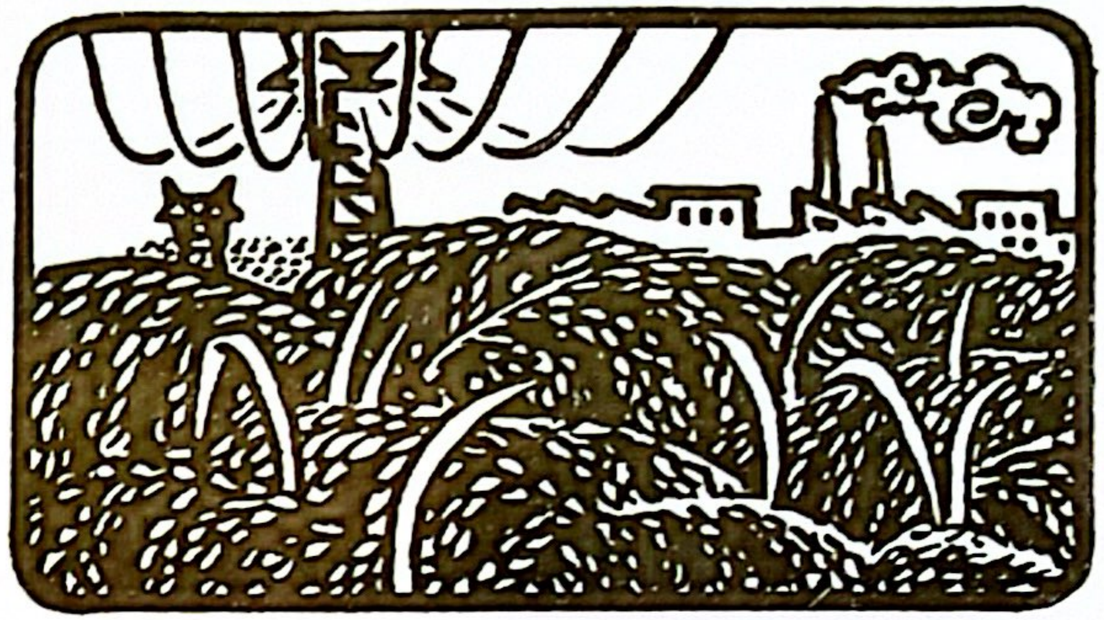
The Viet Nam Federation of Trade Unions is a political and professional organization of manual and brain workers. It was founded in 1946 and has been a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions since 1949.

The Viet Nam Women's Union was founded in 1946 and is a member of the International Federation of Democratic Women. The Union constitutes a large front uniting all patriotic women who stand for peace and socialism.

The Viet Nam Youth Federation is a broad organization uniting all patriotic and democratic young people. It has been a member of the World Federation of Democratic Youth since 1948.

The Viet Nam Working Youth Union (now the Ho Chi Minh Working Youth Union) continues the traditions of revolutionary struggle of the League of Young Communists founded in 1931. A member of the Viet Nam Youth Federation, it constitutes the vanguard of the youth.

The Viet Nam Students' Union broadly unites all Vietnamese students. It is a member of the International Students' Union.



Chapter IV

ECONOMIC EVOLUTION

PRIOR to the August 1945 Revolution our economy entirely depended on French financial, economic and political interests. That explains why it was structurally unbalanced. There was no harmony between the various regions of the country : some areas (mines, plantations, ports, etc.) were part of the world marked while a true national market did not yet exist. This capitalist economic sector, impelled from outside, partly spread inside the country. Thus the economy tended to be divided into regions with capitalist predominance and traditional ones, where prevailed the small village economy.

The worst consequence of the colonial yoke coupled with feudal exploitation in the countryside was the shackles imposed upon the country's productive capacity. The economy was extremely backward : in 1939, the share of industry in the aggregate value of national production was only about 10 per cent. Our country imported from France not only machines and spare parts but even needles and thread.

The exploitation of dirt-cheap manpower took precedence over a rational utilization of modern techniques in industry. Agriculture was in an almost mediaeval stage. The yield of ricefields was very low (the average paddy yield was 1.3 tons per hectare per crop). Natural resources were far from being effectively and rationally exploited.

The broad mass of the population suffered from miserable living conditions.

For the young Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, born of the August 1945 Revolution, the legacy of colonialism had been further aggravated by five years of Japanese occupation (1940-1945). Industrial and handicraft enterprises had ceased functioning because of war destructions or lack of raw materials. Most of the communication lines had been destroyed. Rice stocking by the French colonial administration and the Japanese occupation troops, made even worse by hoarding by speculators was the cause of a terrible famine in which two million died early in 1945.

From the August Revolution to Dien Bien Phu (1945-1954)

In spite of unimaginable economic and financial difficulties to which were added inextricable political difficulties arising from the occupation of the country by the Chiang Kai-shek troops in the North and the landing of British-Indian troops followed by a French Expeditionary Corps in the South, the young popular government was resolved to defend the country's newly regained independence.

This choice implied an appropriate economic policy aimed at :

— Intensifying agricultural production by all means in order to stamp out famine in Bac Bo ;

— Laying the foundations of an independent national economy (taking over of Japanese possessions ; requisition of public utilities , abolition of the privileges of monopolistic societies and of restrictions to the practice of trade ; struggle against the *Banque de l'Indochine* in the monetary domain, suppression of the opium, alcohol and salt colonial State monopolies, setting up of a customs system) ;

— Creating State finances directly based on the support of the popular masses, bourgeois strata, rich people... to meet the urgent needs of the State ; and

— Applying democratic measures in the agrarian field : confiscation of lands belonging to the French colonialists and native traitors to be distributed to the peasants, partition of communal lands, land-rent reduction of 25 per cent as compared with that before the Revolution. This policy proved very fruitful thanks to the Vietnamese people's efforts and eager patriotism. However, the country, hardly organized, had to engage in a war of resistance which was to last nine years (1945-1954).

The setting up of a war economy in a country exhausted by long colonial and feudal exploitation posed many problems, the more so since right from the beginning of the hostilities, the French Expeditionary Corps occupied all major cities, main communication lines, ports, etc... The government of the Resistance withdrew to the mountainous regions and the rural areas, transforming them into revolutionary bases.

The war economy assumed two essential aspects : economic build-up in the free zones and economic sabotage of the enemy-occupied regions. The setting up of the national economy was ruled by the following principles :

— to carry out resistance to colonial aggression and national reconstruction abreast ;

— to strive to meet our needs in all domains, i.e. to rely on our own economic and financial resources to fight the war.

It was a "war economy in its form and a new democratic one in its content". On the one hand we had to strive to supply the front and the population with a view to a protracted war ; on the other, to abolish French imperialist domination, gradually carry out land reform and liberate the productive forces in agriculture, lay the foundations of the State sector, develop the co-operative sector, help and guide the national bourgeoisie in its activities.

To meet the needs of the country and provide for war expenses, the government advocated a systematic policy of intensification of production and of strict economy.

The occupation of the big towns and main communication lines by the enemy resulted in the formation of regions almost cut off from one another. One understands that in these conditions the slogan : "intensify production by all means" had to be completed by the directive : each region must seek to satisfy its own

needs. Each zone had to build up an autonomous economy, based on agriculture and handicrafts.

The economy of the resistance roughly went through two great stages. During the first stage (1946 - 1950) particular attention was paid to the transfer of machines and raw materials to the revolutionary bases, the destruction of railway-lines and main roads to hinder the enemy's "lightning offensives", the "scorched earth" policy of not letting anything fall into the enemy's hands, the intensification of production by all means to supply the front and the rear, the economic encirclement and sabotage of enemy-controlled regions, at the same time the organization of trade exchanges between these and the free zones, the issue of Vietnamese currency and the suppression of the piastre of the *Banque de l'Indochine*, the development of the people's national democratic economy and the improvement of the population's living conditions in order to stimulate their combativeness.

With the shifting from guerilla warfare to mobile warfare which entailed increased military and economic expenses, there opened a second stage (1951 - 1954) during which a whole series of new economic measures was adopted:

1. Unified management of public finances; increase of receipts and, at the same time, reduction of budgetary expenses; establishment of a single agricultural tax, in kind.

2. Creation of a State Bank and issue of a new currency; reorganization of the credit system.

3. Organization of State trade; control and stabilization of prices; establishment of trade relations with the socialist camp, and struggle against the enemy in the economic field.

During the national democratic revolution, the anti-imperialist struggle and the anti-feudal struggle were strategically and indissolubly interconnected. However, practically, they could not always be led abreast and with the same intensity. For although the imperialists and the landowners were the two main enemies of our people, the more dangerous one was imperialism. Thus, so long as the country was not liberated, the anti-imperialist struggle must stay in the foreground and the anti-feudal struggle be subordinated to it and serve it. Hence the necessity of discriminating between the landowners, rallying to the National Front all those who could be rallied and neutralizing those who could not. The Party advocated an agrarian policy in three stages: first: 1945-1949; second: 1949-1953; and third: 1953-1957 (at the time of the armistice in 1954, only part of the 3rd stage had been carried out).

Here are the main measures taken:

A decree promulgated in July 1949 insisted on the 25 per cent reduction of land rent, suppressed all supplementary rents imposed on tenant-farmers, abolished the system of intermediaries in renting, temporarily handing over lands belonging to traitors to poor peasants.

In May 1950, the government decreed the confiscation of lands left fallow and provisionally distributed them to poor peasants. In the same period were promulgated decrees fixing terms and conditions for the renting of land, reducing by 18 and 20 per cent the interests paid in cash and in kind respectively, and cancelling all debts for which the interests already collected represented more than double the initial capital.

The putting into force of a single agricultural tax in 1951 greatly contributed to limiting feudal exploitation, improving the peasants' living conditions and meeting the requirements of the Resistance.

In March 1953, a mass action was launched in the free zones with a view to systematically applying the reduction of land rents and the retroactive repayment of rents unduly collected.

Lastly, on December 4, 1953, the Law on Land Reform was passed by the National Assembly. It opened the way to the last stage and aimed at abolishing the regime of seizure of lands by the colonialists and feudal landownership.

To ensure the realization of the land reform, the Party pointed out that one must firmly rely on the poor and landless peasants, closely unite with the middle peasants, ally with the rich peasants, overthrow the class of landowners, while discriminating between the various categories of landowners.

With regard to the rich peasants, the Party stressed that one must ally with them on the political plane, while maintaining, on the economic plane, their mode of exploitation. For the alliance with the rich peasants contributed to isolating the landowners even further and reassuring the middle peasants.

As regards the landowners, the policy adopted depended on their political attitude (distinction was made between three kinds of landowners: those who are traitors and reactionaries, the apolitical landowners, and the partisans of the Resistance). This led to different measures being applied: confiscation, requisition or expropriation with indemnification.

The mobilization of the masses to carry out the land reform gave rise to a great revolutionary impetus among the peasants, both at the front and in the rear, both in the free and the occupied zones.

The recipients received their plots free of charge.

With regard to agricultural production, it had to be intensified at all costs, the essential needs of the population and the army being essentially ensured by agriculture.

Using a forceful formula "Plentiful food, powerful army", President Ho Chi Minh untiringly called on everyone to increase agricultural production. Answering this appeal, the peasants succeeded, at the price of persevering efforts, in increasing this production, particularly that of subsidiary crops, despite the great damage caused by the enemy and natural calamities. Vegetable growing and poultry rearing were also widely practised in the free zones.

Handicrafts and small industry ranked second, immediately after agriculture, and were the principal source of consumer goods in wartime. In spite of numerous difficulties, they made great strides and greatly contributed to meeting the needs of the resistance, thus foiling the enemy's policy of blockade. During the war, for the first time in our history, State workshops producing capital and consumer goods as well as weapons and munitions made their appearance; they were the embryos of future socialist industry.

With regard to home trade, the government encouraged private initiative with a view to increasing the flow of goods between the various free zones. The part of private trade prevailed in total turnover: 80-85 per cent in consumer goods and about 70 per cent in the sale of forest products. The remainder was ensured by the State trade service, created in 1951. The latter particularly centered its activity on some essential products and wholesale trade.

When the free zones and the occupied ones began overlapping, exchanges between them were subjected to close control, chiefly to safeguard the independent character of the economy in the free zones, buy industrial products indispensable for the resistance from the occupied zones and sell the agricultural and forest surpluses of the free zones.

Foreign trade, still embryonic, was chiefly carried out with the People's Republic of China.

The national currency, issued in the resistance, contributed to giving a strong impulse to production and the flow of goods, and mobilizing the population's material resources with a view to a protracted war.

The State Bank, founded in 1951, paid particular attention to setting up a credit system aimed at developing production, agricultural especially, and organizing State trade.

A new fiscal system, more equitable and more rational, was applied, of which the main component was the agricultural tax in kind. This tax with a progressive rate was calculated on the basis of the agricultural income of each household. A preliminary tax deduction was granted in proportion to the number of persons to be fed.

In transport and communications, let us recall that at the beginning of the hostilities, with a view to hampering the movement of the French Expeditionary Corps, the population had destroyed thousands of kilometres of roads and railway-lines. From 1950, with the change in the balance of forces in favour of the resistance, the lines of communication were actively repaired to transport troops and increase exchanges between the People's Republic of China and Viet Nam and between the free and the occupied zones.

In the transport of food supplies and goods, rudimentary means played a decisive role. The most remarkable one was the bicycle transformed into a carrier capable of taking a 320-kg load.

On the whole, transport and communications greatly contributed to the victory of the resistance and the development of the national economy.

Such were the various aspects of the war economy during the 1946-1954 period.

With the re-establishment of peace in 1954, the people's national democratic revolution was completed in the main and a new stage — socialist revolution — began.

Between two wars (1955-1964)

The passage to socialism of a backward economy ravaged by nine years of war could only be carried out in many stages.

Period of reconstruction (1955-1957)

First of all, the national economy had to be restored. During the period of reconstruction (1955-1957) particular attention was paid to:

1. the completion of land reform;

2. the restoration and development of the economy, the stabilization of the people's living conditions;

3. measures aimed at stabilizing the economic and financial situation and particularly prices;

4. the liquidation of all vestiges of colonial economic domination in the newly-liberated zones.

After the restoration of peace, land reform went on. As a result of this reform which embraced 3,691 villages, 810,000 hectares of land were distributed free of charge to 2,104,138 peasant households grouping 8,323,639 persons, that is 72.8 per cent of the peasants. The peasants also received farm implements and houses belonging to landowners.

In spite of errors of a "left" character in the carrying out of the official policy, the land reform, which was carried out within the framework of the people's national democratic revolution, had a strategic significance.

It greatly contributed to the historic Dien Bien Phu victory; it liberated the productive forces in the countryside, gave a vigorous impulse to agricultural production and opened the way to industrial development. As the landowners' power collapsed, one saw the rise of a labouring peasantry henceforth master of the countryside.

Land reform appeared as a necessary stage in the advance towards agricultural co-operation, then in a preliminary phase, that of mutual-aid teams, either seasonal or permanent. In 1956, over 50 per cent of peasant households participated in these mutual-aid teams, mainly seasonal.

The agricultural policy carried out during that period greatly contributed to stimulating agricultural production, that of foodstuffs in particular. Immediately after the armistice waste lands had to be put back under cultivation, agricultural hydraulic works rebuilt, dykes reinforced, the livestosk replenished, and farm implements and methods of culture improved. Thanks to these measures, the total value of agricultural production increased by 21 per cent from 1955 to 1957, that is an annual average increase of 10 per cent. Compared with 1955, food crops, industrial plants and animal husbandry increased by 11, 13.2 and 43 per cent respectively. The average annual production of paddy during 1955-1957 reached 3.87 million tons, thus exceeding the record year of 1939 by 60 per cent.

In industry, particular attention was paid to the immediate restoration and construction of a certain number of undertakings for the production of consumer goods and, simultaneously, the enlarging and construction of some heavy industry enterprises (extractive industry in particular) with a view to export as well as meeting national needs.

At the restoration of peace, the government took over public undertakings and repurchased the enterprises belonging to the French capitalists. Simultaneously, it undertook, with the help of the other socialist countries, the construction of some fifty new factories, and enlarged a certain number of nationalized undertakings.

Vietnamese private industrial and commercial enterprises had a share in restoring the national economy. Through the system of sale-purchase contracts the State trade service guided their production.

Moreover, great attention was paid to the development of handicrafts, a precious auxiliary of industry.

In 1954, our country was in a state of utter industrial deficiency. Overcoming enormous difficulties (lack of materials, technicians and skilled workers), the country succeeded, late in 1957, in reattaining the level of 1939 for the total value of industrial and handicraft production. From 1955 to 1957, the latter increased by 138 per cent for Group A and by 187 per cent for Group B, stress being laid on light industry but conditions for a future development of heavy industry being not neglected; the part of modern industry reached 10.5 per cent of total production (industry and agriculture) as against 3.4 per cent in 1955.

After liberation, most of the lines of communication had been greatly damaged. One had to rapidly restore the railway line from Hanoi to the Chinese border, which links the country to the socialist camp, as well as the Haiphong port and roads of vital importance. The State sector was developed, while the socialist transformation began of private transport companies, and both rudimentary and modern means of transport were used.

In home trade, the government strove to ensure adequate supplies and restore trade in the newly liberated regions. Simultaneously it took measures to strengthen State trade, develop buying and marketing co-operatives, use private trade while transforming it, stabilize prices and meet the needs of the population.

Foreign trade developed, chiefly after the re-establishment of the main lines of communication. Henceforward managed by the State, it was subordinated to national requirements, rather than to foreign interests as it had been before 1945. For export, there was a greater diversification of products. Imports were predominantly of means of production, without neglecting indispensable consumer goods. The independence of foreign trade was also seen in the diversification of commercial partners. The socialist countries clearly took pride of place in our foreign trade, but trade relations with the capitalist and newly independent countries also tended to increase.

By late 1957, economic restoration — which was accompanied by the progressive modification of the former relations of production — was fundamentally completed, and our country entered upon a new stage, that of large-scale socialist transformation.

Socialist transformation

The three-year plan (1958-1960) aimed at intensifying agricultural and industrial production (mainly agricultural), realizing the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and private industry and trade, and raising the people's material and cultural living standards, while strengthening national defence.

After the completion of land reform, came agricultural co-operation, considered the main link of the whole process of socialist transformation. To bring about this co-operation even before industry could supply agricultural machines constituted one of the characteristics of the co-operative movement, which comprised in general 3 stages: mutual-aid team, low-level co-operative, high-level co-operative. But that supposes a gradual improvement of agricultural technique along with industrial development.

On the political plane, to carry out agricultural co-operation, one should rely first of all on the poor peasants and the lower stratum of the middle peasants (about 60 per cent of the rural population), ally with the other strata of the middle peasants, limit the economic exploitation practised by the rich peasants so as finally to liquidate it, and prevent the landowners from raising their heads while allowing them to re-educate themselves through work. The principles of free consent, mutual benefit and democratic management guided the co-operative movement. The co-op members' lands, draught animals and main farm implements were collectivized. However, each of them could keep for his

personal use a portion of land not exceeding 5 per cent of the average cultivated area per inhabitant in the village.

By late 1960, 85.5 per cent of the peasant households with 73.3 per cent of the arable lands had adhered to the production co-operatives (74.02 per cent had joined low-level co-ops and 11.81 high-level co-ops). That was a revolutionary transformation in the relations of production in the countryside. Moreover a dozen State farms were created.

The value of agricultural production constantly increased from 1957 to 1959. A great drought set it back a little in 1960. Anyhow, from 1957 to 1960, it increased by 13.1 per cent (9.4 per cent for crops and 53.6 per cent for animal husbandry).

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In the industrial domain, efforts were simultaneously made in the production of means of production and that of consumer goods, with greater stress on the former. Attention was also paid to the parallel development of centrally-run and locally-run State industry. Handicrafts regrouped into co-operatives were associated with State local undertakings.

The socialist transformation of private industry and trade held an important place in the three-year plan. The private capitalist sector which had played a positive role during the period of reconstruction, became in fact, with the rapid development of the socialist sector, an obstacle to progress. One had to go further in socialist transformation, i.e. shift to the upper forms of State capitalism. These were embodied in "joint State-private enterprises" which represented in fact a policy of "repurchase" of capitalist property. In these enterprises, the means of production and funds became State property, but the former proprietors who could continue to hold responsible posts, received an annual fixed "interest" of 6-8 per cent for the industrial undertakings and 5-7 per cent for the commercial enterprises, that "interest" being considered a progressive retrieval of the capital the amount of which had been reevaluated at the time of the repurchase. In the economic field, the "repurchase" of the capitalists' means of production, in the higher form of State capitalism henceforward excluded the action of the economic laws of capitalism (law of surplus value, anarchistic development of production and free competition, etc).

This passage to the higher form of State capitalism was completed late in 1960: 1,895 private enterprises became "joint State-private ones".

During the three-year plan, industrial and handicraft production increased by 164.5 per cent for Group A and 50.3 per cent for Group B. It passed from 31.4 per cent in 1957 to 41.7 per cent of the total value of national production in 1960. However, the share of handicrafts in total industrial production still remained rather high (nearly 43 per cent in 1960).

In home trade, the government took steps to extend both State trade and co-operative trade. The State sector accounted for 93.6 per cent of total turnover of wholesale trade and 50.7 per cent of retail trade, as against 52.6 per cent and 25.8 per cent in 1957. The share of co-operative trade in retail sales, in the socialist sector alone, reached 23.1 per cent in 1960, as against 5.5 per cent in 1957.

Simultaneously, the socialist transformation of private trade was speeded up, including small trade. By late 1960, most businessmen had turned their private enterprises into joint State-private ones. They could also convert their trading undertakings into industrial ones or invest their funds in production, of course within the framework of State capitalism.

As to the small traders, who were close allies of the working class, they were encouraged to accept socialist transformation and chiefly to direct their efforts towards productive activities.

By late 1960, 87.9 per cent of craftsmen had been grouped into production co-operatives.

While developing exchanges and strengthening control over the market, the government pursued the policy of stabilization and readjustment of prices.

In foreign trade, attention was paid to stimulating both exports (foodstuffs, agricultural and handicraft products) and imports (gradual increase of equipment, raw materials and fuel, and gradual decrease of consumer goods) which increased by 90 and 100 per cent respectively in 1960 as compared with 1957.

Generally speaking, one saw profound modifications in the relations of production and marked progress in the structure of productive forces at the end of the three-year plan. The exploitation of man by man was abolished in the main. That was a historic event of great revolutionary scope.

Late in 1960, socialist transformation being completed in the main, began the second stage of socialist revolution, during which

we had to concentrate on the building of socialism, chiefly on socialist industrialization, while completing socialist transformation. And this task devolved upon the first five-year plan (1961-1965). As the war of destruction launched by the USA began in August 1964, we shall only deal with the first four years of the five-year plan.

The first five-year plan

During the first five-year plan, efforts were made on the one hand to develop industry and agriculture, extend the network of communication lines, intensify State and co-operative trade, and on the other, complete socialist transformation, consolidate the State sector and extend the socialist relations of production to the whole of the national economy. Moreover, attention was paid to gradually raising the people's material and cultural standards, speeding up the training of cadres and skilled workers and intensifying geological and other surveys. Parallel to the economic progress, great efforts were made to strengthen national defence.

The main characteristic of socialist industrialisation in our country is that it starts from a backward agricultural economy and that we have to progress from small individual to large-scale mechanized production. Starting from the objective necessity of building an independent national economy, we have opted for a priority development of the means of production, a necessary condition for raising work productivity. However, this development must be rational, i.e. adapted to the specific conditions, needs and possibilities, of the country. So, we only developed the fundamental branches of heavy industry: mechanical engineering, electric power, coal mining, metallurgy, chemical industry and building-materials industry.

While giving priority to the development of heavy industry, we had to closely co-ordinate the progress of industry and that of agriculture. While industry, chiefly heavy industry, plays the leading role in the national economy, agriculture serves as a basis for industrial development. Agriculture must, as a matter of fact, increase the value of commodity production so as to meet the needs of the non-agricultural population, first of all in food, and to supply raw materials to light industry and products for export. By raising its productivity, agriculture could convert part of agricultural manpower into industrial workers. It also constitutes the largest outlet for industrial products. Industry could

only develop on the basis of a prosperous agriculture. The important role played by agriculture in the industrialization of the country determines the essential orientation of industry which is to serve the development of agriculture by supplying it with fertilizers, equipment, implements, power and building materials.

Parallel to the development of heavy industry we paid attention to the progress of light industry, particularly food processing, textiles and other current consumer goods. Thanks to co-operation with other socialist countries, we built centrally-run big and middle-size modern undertakings which formed the core of the economy. However, small industry and handicrafts still played an important role in meeting the needs of local consumption and export. So we had to vigorously promote local industry and especially boost handicraft production... The development of local industry (including handicrafts) was carried out by improving production techniques, completing the socialist transformation of handicrafts and bettering the management of local enterprises and handicraft workshops. At the beginning of the five-year plan, the new relations of production, though preponderant, rested mostly (about 90 per cent) on non-mechanized work. One had to embark on a technical revolution which constitutes the very essence of socialist industrialization and which must be pursued during a long period. It implied the bringing into play of all the existing technical potential to boost production from the handicraft to the semi-mechanized, then mechanized stage, and at the same time, proceed direct to mechanized, even automated production, thanks to the importation of vanguard techniques. This technical revolution is closely linked to the strengthening of new relations of production and the ideological and cultural revolution.

From 1961 to 1964, industrial and handicraft production increased by 70.1 per cent (an annual average of 14.2 per cent), 94.4 per cent for Group A and 57.4 per cent for Group B. The share of industry in the gross national product passed from 16.9 per cent in 1955 to 41.8 per cent in 1960 and over 50 per cent in 1964. However, handicraft production still accounted for an appreciable part: 30.1 per cent of total industrial and handicraft production in 1964.

By 1964, heavy industry succeeded in producing a part of small- and middle-size means of production and light industry, about 80 per cent of current consumer goods.

It was by resting on co-operative agriculture that our country embarked on socialist industrialization. During the five-year plan, we strove to consolidate the agricultural co-operatives, raise them to a higher level (socialist cooperatives) and enlarge them, each to include 150 households on the average in the delta and the midlands.

By late 1964, 86.6 per cent of the peasant households had joined the co-operatives (58.8 per cent of the socialist type) which tilled 76.8 per cent of the total area of land.

A fundamental question concerning the co-operatives was the setting up of their technical-material basis. In close connection with the development of agricultural co-operation, particular attention was paid to developing hydraulic works (combining small-scale works built by the population with middle-size ones by the local administration and large-scale works by the State), with a view to increasing the irrigated areas, reducing waterlogging and practising intensive cultivation. We also tried to generalize the use of improved and semi-mechanized tools, and, to a certain extent, develop agricultural mechanization in irrigation, ploughing and harrowing. Moreover, the State set up machine and tractor stations to serve the co-operatives to which it also sold mechanical pumps, motor-cultivators, various kinds of small machines, and fertilizers.

In 1963, a wide campaign was launched to improve the management of co-operatives: the point was to determine the orientation of production, rationally utilize manpower, increase accumulation and common funds, associate material incentives with ideological education and scrupulously apply the principle of democratic management.

As regards the State farms, we strove to consolidate them, and improve their management.

In the domain of production, particular stress was laid on the intensification and diversification of agriculture, mainly food production. On the basis of progress in the latter, animal husbandry and industrial crops were developed.

Despite the exceptionally unfavourable weather conditions in 1963, total agricultural production showed an average annual increase of 4.8 per cent from 1961 to 1964. The share of the co-operatives and individual peasants in 1964 was 98.7 per cent, and that of the State farms 1.3 per cent, as against 99.5 and 0.5 per cent in 1960.

Total food production (rice and other foodstuffs evaluated in paddy), during the 1961-1964 period reached an annual average of 5,763 thousand tons, as against 5,150 thousand tons during 1958-1960,

an increase of 12 per cent. As regards industrial crops, their aggregate value annually increased by 12.2 per cent on an average from 1961 to 1963.

During the five-year plan, home trade had the essential task of stimulating production in general and the technical revolution in particular, and at the same time of gradually improving, in a selective way, the population's living standards. Moreover, attention was paid to organizing a "unified socialist market", strengthening the State trade and developing the co-operative trade, integrating the joint State-private commercial enterprises into the State sector while improving their management, organizing the market in the countryside, and lastly carrying out the socialist transformation of small traders, a long and complex process.

As to foreign trade, it played a prominent role in socialist industrialisation and technical revolution. It also contributed to accumulation, the improvement of living standards and the carrying out of foreign policy. Stress was laid on the increase of exports — by turning to account the great possibilities of tropical agriculture, abundant natural wealth and manpower — in order to match the increased importation of modern equipment intended for the technical revamping of the whole national economy and that of raw materials, fuel and indispensable consumer goods. As compared with 1960, the total value of exports increased by 35.7 per cent in 1964. In the same year, the share of agricultural and forest products in total exports reached 13.2 per cent (a low percentage for an agricultural country like ours) and that of industrial and handicraft products 86.8 per cent.

In 1964, the value of imports increased by 16.9 per cent compared with 1960. They were essentially means of production (84.7 per cent of the total in 1964) for heavy industry and agriculture. To pay for these imports, besides the credits granted by the socialist countries, we stimulated exports on the basis of increased production and economy in home consumption. In 1964, we traded with 45 countries. The same year, exports to socialist countries and imports from them accounted for 79.7 and 88.9 per cent of total exports and imports, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China being our two biggest customers and suppliers. Exchanges with non-socialist countries also tended to increase.

The results obtained showed that it is quite possible for a developing country like ours to break the vicious circle of poverty by relying essentially on its own efforts. This means that

we should not rely on others for building up our national economy; it does not mean to dispense with the socialist countries' co-operation and help. This co-operation and help has the double aim of contributing to strengthening our economic independence from the imperialists and tightening the bonds of friendship with the socialist camp.

In brief, in the 1954–1964 period socialist relations of production were set up and consolidated, and a new technical-material basis for the national economy began to take shape.

Parallel to those economic transformations, the social physiognomy of the country had changed. The class of landowners had been abolished, the national bourgeoisie converted, and the exploitation of man by man liquidated in the main. The working class, formerly harshly exploited and oppressed, was from now on playing the leading role in the building of socialism. The collective peasantry had also taken shape.

Facing the bombs (1965-1968)

During the resistance against US aggression, the North and the South respectively became the rear area and the frontline of a same nation in struggle. To consolidate the rear area, it was important to continue the building of socialism while adjusting oneself to war conditions. By so doing, we managed to strengthen our economic and military potential, and bring all-out support to the revolutionary struggle in the South. The resistance against foreign aggression and the building of socialism are two tasks closely linked with each other.

With this economic orientation, we had to:

1. Intensify production and, at the same time, fight the enemy;

To produce and fight constituted two tasks of equal importance and formed a dialectical unity. So true it is that the fight could not be brought to a successful end without an assured production, which in turn required an efficacious defence for its protection and development.

2. Mobilize all human, material and financial forces to provide for the needs of the war, while consolidating the socialist relations of production.

3. Continue the building of the technical-material basis of socialism, chiefly socialist industrialization.

4. Maintain the population's living standards with a spirit of economy and sacrifice; closely co-ordinate the immediate imperatives (resistance against aggression) with the long-term requirements of the building of socialism.

Stress was laid on the development of regional economies. People's war implied the transformation of each province into a strategic unit in production and defence as well as in the operational and logistic fields. The rise of the regional economy allowed each province to face the requirements of production and defence, and to provide for the essential needs of the population, thus rendering it capable of producing and fighting for a long time.

The development of the regional economy was also indispensable owing to the fact that we directly enter the socialist path without going through the stage of capitalist development. We start from an industrially under-developed country in which the structural lack of balance between agriculture and industry may last a certain time while the source of internal accumulation remains low. So we must, parallel to an appropriate development of the centrally-run key-branches, give a strong impulse to the regional economies — in agriculture and light industry in particular — with a view to attaining a beginning of balance between agriculture and industry, between local production and consumption, creating favourable conditions for increased internal accumulation and setting up a new social division of labour.

In this perspective, each province with a population of from one to two million inhabitants was considered an economic entity entrusted on the one hand with fulfilling its obligations towards the central administration and on the other, developing its production and improving its population's living standards. It had to pay particular attention to giving multilateral development to its agriculture and a strong impulse to its industry, which should be able to meet the local needs of agriculture, transport and communications, consumption and capital construction. It constituted a planning and budgetary unit, a market for the agricultural and industrial products of the region, and at last a logistic unit.

In short, each province or town was entrusted with the task of leading the whole economic life within its competence and this, in conformity with the Party's general policy and the State plans.

It is with this spirit that the government promulgated in January 1968 a decree defining the economic role of the provinces and those cities that are under the central administration. According to this decree, attention was paid to "extending the competence of the regions, allowing them to bring all their latent forces into play with a view to meeting the needs of local economic building in time, increasing the national economic potential, while satisfying the ulterior requirements of the building of socialism" and at the same time strengthening the centralized direction.

It was in the light of the new economic orientation that were determined the objectives of the annual plans during the years 1965-1968:

1. To mobilize to the maximum all the forces of the nation with a view to fighting US aggression;
2. To maintain and develop national production in accordance with the war conditions, aiming not only at satisfying immediate requirements but also preparing conditions for the future;
3. To provide for the essential needs of the population: food, clothing, housing, transport, health and education.

Agriculture concentrated its efforts on solving the food problem with a view to meeting the needs of the army and population; at the same time, it strove to supply industry with raw materials in increasing quantity, and provide a certain number of products for export.

For four years, US aviation and navy constantly bombed and strafed dykes and hydraulic works, villages and ricefields, peasants and draught animals at work. In certain regions, like Vinh Linh or Quang Binh, the destruction had a genocidal character. US aircraft sprayed toxic chemicals over certain localities, killing domestic animals and destroying crops.

To that were added natural calamities: typhoons and floods (chiefly in 1968), droughts, successive cold waves, etc... But in spite of all, the peasants clung to their lands. They performed truly epic deeds, in fighting as well as in production.

The bonds between co-op members and their co-operatives grew closer. The agricultural co-operatives embraced 94.3 per cent of peasant households by the end of 1968 (as against 84.7 per cent in 1964). In the regions particularly attacked by the enemy (Vinh Linh, Quang Binh, etc.) this proportion reached 97 or even 100 per cent. High-level co-operatives represented 78.9 per cent of the total by the end of 1968, as against 58 per cent in 1965.

Agriculture set itself these objectives: 5 tons of paddy, 1 worker, two pigs per tilled hectare.

Those three objectives aimed at raising output in cultivation and animal husbandry.

To attain them, a whole series of agro-technical measures was applied.

Irrigation was in that respect a factor of prime importance. While ensuring the defence of big hydraulic works against enemy planes and trying to draw the maximum benefit from them, we laid stress on the construction of small and medium-size hydraulic works. This was co-ordinated with the reparcelling of ricefields (small plots were grouped into bigger ones for better irrigation), the area of irrigated lands passed from 84.5 per cent of all the lands under cultivation in 1964 to 86.9 per cent in 1967.

The agricultural co-operatives set up teams specially entrusted with the preparation of fertilizers. Owing to the shortage of chemical fertilizers, maximum use was made of manure and green compost (azolla pinnata, crotalaria, sesbania, etc.).

Seeds also constituted an important factor in the improvement of paddy yield and quality. So the co-operatives strove to use up to 60 per cent of new seeds.

The co-operatives also paid attention to improving the organization of labour and perfecting farm implements.

In the conditions of hand labour, a rational organization of labour constituted the essential element for raising work output. So, the agricultural co-operative movement must go hand in hand with a good organization of labour, particularly in the specialized brigades.

The peasants received, besides the traditional farm implements, a great number of improved implements and, progressively, agricultural machines. The co-operatives were gradually equipped with Diesel or electric engines of from 10 to 20 kw. to power motor-pumps and husking-, threshing-, crushing-, and winnowing-machines. In 1968, 27 per cent of the agricultural co-operatives were equipped with small mechanical engineering workshops.

Technical renovation required an increasing contingent of technicians in culture, phytopathology and animal husbandry, etc. Almost all agricultural co-operatives had one or two technicians graduated from secondary technical schools. The application of science and new techniques became a mass phenomenon.

Besides paddy, great attention was also paid to subsidiary food crops, industrial crops and market gardening.

In 1966, the number of buffaloes and oxen increased by 31 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively as compared with 1965. That of pigs went up 6.2 per cent from 1965 to 1966, then 4.2 per cent from 1967 to 1968, despite natural calamities.

The State farms made appreciable progress in spite of air raids. As compared with 1964, their production of coffee increased by 3.7 times, that of tea by 8 times, that of oranges by several

times, in 1967. Although their animal husbandry did not make such rapid strides, the number of milch-cows, buffaloes and pigs showed an appreciable increase (for pigs, the rate of increase was 63 per cent from 1964 to 1967).

In order to raise their output, the State farms tried to mechanize work in the cultivation of various plants in the conditions of a rainy country, with submerged rice-fields and steep hills; encouraging results were obtained.

On the whole, despite heavy bombardments and natural calamities, agriculture succeeded, at the price of immense efforts, in meeting the needs of defence, maintaining the population's living standards and serving as a basis for industrial development.

Industrial policy has followed three guide-lines:

1. To defend the existing enterprises while adapting them to the war conditions (evacuation of factories and dispersal of workshops) and bringing into full play their production capabilities.

2. To boost regional industry, particularly the small-size enterprises.

3. To carry on the building of centrally-run enterprises with appropriate tempo and scope while rejigging the existing ones, especially mechanical engineering factories, power stations and coal-mines.

Many centrally-managed industrial branches (electricity, coal, engineering, textile, paper, sugar...) were thus able to function satisfactorily. In comparison with 1964, certain centrally-operated branches of heavy and light industry even recorded marked progress.

Group A:

— Mechanical engineering: + 9 per cent.
— Mining and chemical industry: + 6.8 per cent.

Group B:

— Printing and stationery: + 23 per cent.
— Glassware, pottery and leather articles: + 8.4 per cent.

Production devoted to national defence and regional industry received a strong impetus. It is to be noted that the share going to agriculture represented 32 per cent of the gross value of heavy industry output in 1968.

The salient feature was the growth of regional industry. A complex network of regional industries was gradually set up.

It enabled each province to become its own logistic base, contributed to a new equilibrium between its agriculture and industry, between production and consumption, and brought about a new social division of labour.

Regional industry was geared to local agriculture (establishment of small workshops for engineering construction and repair). It moreover contributed, according to the needs of each region, to the development of transport and communications, the production of current consumer goods and the growth of construction and exportation.

Basing itself on its own material and human resources and taking into account the present and future needs of its various economic branches, each province tried to map out a structure adapted to its industrial complex.

In general, regional industrial enterprises are of small or medium size, require little capital and can be built in a short time.

The development of regional industry implies a strong impulse not only to the State sector, but also to the co-operative sector (small industry and handicrafts) whose share remains fairly important in the gross value of industrial production. In a country where over half a million craftsmen contribute a quarter of the gross industrial production, one cannot neglect handicrafts.

From 1965 to 1968, public investment for regional industry went up four times in comparison with the four previous years (1961-1964). During the four years of the war of destruction, 1,000 State regional enterprises and 2,600 handicraft co-operatives went into operation. In 1968 alone, the number of new industrial enterprises nearly equalled that of the two previous years.

Before the US war of destruction, Quang Binh province near the 17th parallel practically had no industry. By 1968, it had 20 enterprises, turning out 40 new articles.

The growth of the mechanical engineering industry was remarkable. Big mechanized enterprises were split owing to evacuation and dispersal. A vast network of new enterprises and workshops were set up from provincial down to village level and even in agricultural co-operatives. This helped gradually bring about the semi-mechanization and mechanization of various economic branches.

Production of regional mechanical engineering enterprises rose by 58.6 per cent in 1967 compared with 1964; in 1968, it went up by 14.5 per cent in comparison with the previous year.

Weaving, paper-making and food-processing also developed.

As a whole, State regional industrial production was up 39 per cent in 1968 compared with 1964.

Transport and communications were one of the main targets of the US Air Force. In 1967, the number of attacks against our transport and communications was five times that of 1965. After the so-called "restriction of the bombing" (March 31, 1968), air raids were frantically intensified over the region between the 17th and 19th parallels (about one-seventh of DRVN territory): 7,200 raids in October 1968 as against less than 2,500 in March. However, traffic between the rear and the front and between the various regions of the country was kept going. With the active help of the local population, our sappers, engineers and young volunteers fought valiantly and their struggle proved to be a real epic.

Our communication lines even extended in war time, indeed owing to the war itself. The people and the army overcame many difficulties due to the existence of many rivers to build a fairly dense network of roads constantly forking into new branches suited for all means of transport, both rudimentary and modern. In 1966 and 1967 alone, the length of new roads built in the mountain regions equalled 66 per cent of the total built in the five previous years. In the same period, in the delta and the midlands, 25,700 km. of national and local roads were laid, most often in co-ordination with hydraulic works, and 150,000 bridges of all kinds repaired. In 1968 25,000 km. of new roads were built, 4,800 km. of local roads repaired and 15,000 bridges of all kinds laid.

Thanks to these tremendous efforts, transport plans were fulfilled, and the requirements of fighting, production and consumption met.

Together with an intense mobilization of human and material resources of the nation to cope with American aggression, the Party stressed that the people's basic needs (food, clothing, health and education) had to be satisfied to ensure a protracted struggle.

To this end, let us note that the network of State stores and marketing co-operatives doubled in comparison with the pre-war period. From 1964 to 1967, the retail trade turnover increased by 8 per cent per year on the average. During the war the State

continued to supply the population with foodstuffs and other necessities at unchanged prices. The socialist sector played a prominent role and its prices remained stable.

Our victorious resistance to US aggression is due first of all to the fact that our Party, right at the start of the war, worked out an economic policy which has proved wholly correct. It is also because our people, united and imbued with thousands-of-years-old traditions of patriotism and with revolutionary heroism, have responded to President Ho Chi Minh's call and overcome all obstacles to defend their independence and freedom. Finally it is because we have enjoyed a precious, manifold and very important aid from the fraternal socialist countries as well as active help from the communist and international workers' movement and progressive forces throughout the world.

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On November 1st, 1968, the American ruling circles were compelled to unconditionally cease all bombings over North Viet Nam. However, their aircraft continue to encroach upon our air space and to bomb the regions close to the 17th parallel. Together with our Southern compatriots, we must therefore carry on the struggle until they give up their aggressive schemes. On top of that, we must keep on building socialism in the North by pushing ahead the triple revolution now unfolding in production relations, technology, and ideology and culture, the technical revolution being the keystone.

In 1969, we strove gradually to heal our war wounds, curb the effects of particularly serious natural calamities, and develop production in order to ensure the defence of the country and improve the people's living conditions.

Agricultural production has grown ever more diversified and scored successes in the fulfilment of the three immediate objectives. Our peasants have exerted great efforts to fill up bomb-craters and recover tillable lands. The area grown to rice has increased by 80,000 hectares in comparison with 1968. Spring rice with high yield and rapid growth has replaced summer rice on vast areas.

The key branches of the centrally-run *industry* have steadily developed. Stress has been laid on coal, electricity (production of which has gone up 31 per cent compared with 1968), engineering

and building materials. Greater attention has been paid to the turning out of current articles : food items, household appliances, chinaware, pottery, paper, cloth, rush mats... Meanwhile, we have devoted ourselves to boosting regional industry and increasing its action on agriculture.

In 1969, the gross value of industrial and handicraft production augmented by 6 per cent compared with 1968.

In *transport and communications*, great efforts have been made to restore roads, railway stations, wharves, car-parks and means of conveyance. Notable progress has been achieved in the transport of goods and passengers. Passengers' transport has increased by 50 per cent compared with 1968.

The *distribution of goods* has been improved. The network of sales counters has been extended to factories, construction sites and government offices.

The progress achieved in 1969 in economic restoration and development as well as in the betterment of the people's living conditions, has continued.

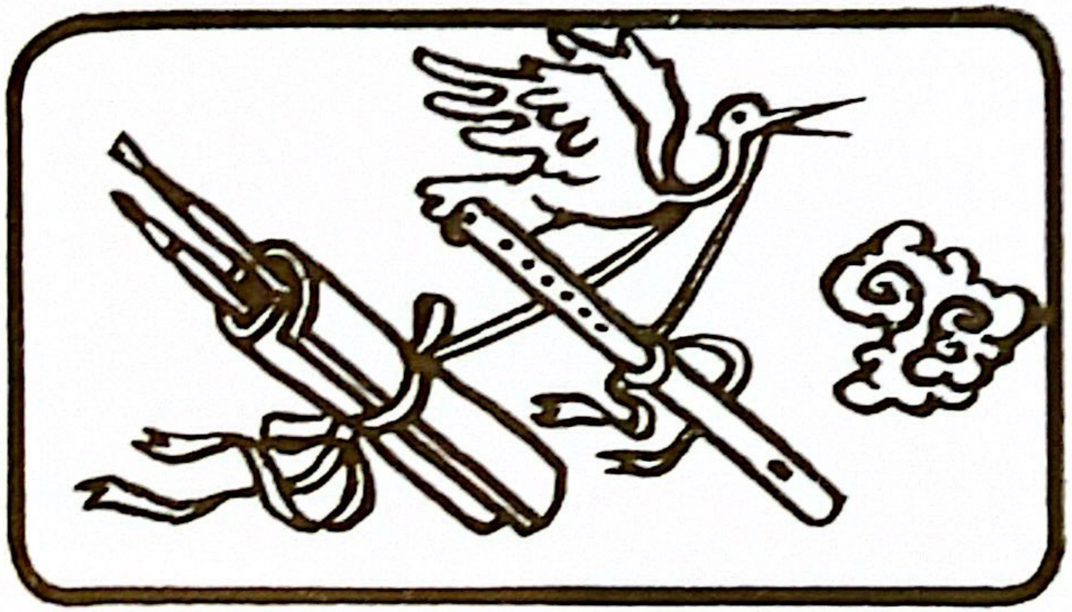
In 1970 and subsequent years, the main economic task consists in giving a strong fillip to agriculture and the production of consumer goods. While strengthening the regional economy, we judiciously restore and develop the centrally-managed economic sector. On the one hand, we raise and diversify agricultural production, restore and develop light industry (including food-processing industry), small industry and handicrafts ; on the other, we restore and vigorously stimulate a number of important branches of heavy industry and develop transport and communications.

Great attention is paid to capital construction.

Alongside the development of production, the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and small trade is completed.

The distribution of goods and the people's living conditions are also actively improved. Other important tasks are : to meet, fully and in time, the requirements of the fighting front, consolidate the rear area in all fields, and reinforce the economic and military potential of the country.

While striving to solve immediate problems we actively set about creating necessary conditions for a vigorous progress of the national economy in the years to come.



Chapter V

A NEW CULTURE

WITH a thousands-of-years-old history, Viet Nam was the cradle of an ancient and original culture; for nearly a century, however, colonialism hindered its development and caused a considerable cultural lag.

By liberating the country, the August 1945 Revolution caused a revival of the national culture.

A few days after the seizure of power, while the struggle against famine and foreign aggression was in full swing, a vast literacy campaign was launched, coupled with an intense struggle

against superstitions and backward customs, sequels of the old regime.

During the War of Resistance against the French colonialists, vigorously carried out cultural activities contributed to extolling patriotism and mobilizing the people for armed struggle and national construction.

Since 1954, North Viet Nam has embarked on a treble revolution, in the fields of production relations, technology, and ideology and culture. A socialist national culture takes shape. It contributes to the building of a new society, in which the exploitation of man by man is abolished and the people, truly equal in rights, are masters of the country. It contributes to the formation of the new man by enhancing his socialist consciousness, collective spirit, will to reunify the country, and patriotism allied to proletarian internationalism.

Far from being hampered by American bombings, cultural activities are boosted; they contribute to heightening the people's love for the Fatherland, revolutionary heroism and determination to win.

While developing their national cultural patrimony, the Vietnamese people seek to assimilate all the treasures of world culture in order to build a vanguard culture and a modern science and technology.

A. EDUCATION

Under colonialism for every 1,000 villages there were on the average 10 primary schools, most of them with only three classes; 95 per cent of the population were illiterate. For all the mountainous regions, there was but one junior high school. And for the whole of Indochina (Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos) there was only one university, which was in fact unworthy of the name. Moreover, education was backward and reactionary in its curricula, organization and methods.

Even before the August 1945 Revolution, the Party already regarded the struggle against the colonialists' obscurantist policy as an integral part of the national-liberation movement.

Elimination of illiteracy
Development of complementary education

After the revolution, for the young popular power, the liquidation of illiteracy was a paramount task.

In September 1945, less than a week after the proclamation of independence, President Ho Chi Minh signed a decree establishing a Department of Popular Education and called on the people to eliminate illiteracy. A mass movement was started. By late 1946, one year after the advent of people's power, more than two million people had learnt to read and write.

This movement developed all through the War of Resistance. In 1954, after the restoration of peace, a "general offensive" was launched against illiteracy, which was in the main eliminated in 1958.

Complementary education has also developed, especially after illiteracy was liquidated. It is given in various forms: "workers' general-education schools" for cadres, "worker-peasant complementary schools" for young people sprung from the labouring masses who wish to take up higher education, schools for ethnic minorities, "three responsibilities" schools for countrywomen, evening courses, correspondence courses, classes held in rotation in factories...

This education which involved 1,068,000 people in 1963-1964, among them 365,000 women, has kept on developing during the War of Resistance against American aggression. In 1968-69 the number rose to 1,300,000, with 38 per cent in junior high schools.

At present, most of the grassroot cadres, formerly fully or quasi illiterate, have gone through junior high school, and most of the workers have finished primary or junior high school. Many young workers follow evening courses of higher education.

Soaring of general education and remoulding of education for the young generation

The socialist revolution implies a treble revolution simultaneously waged in the fields of production relations, technology and ideology and culture, with technological revolution as the keystone.

Therefore, education must be developed on a large scale and given in various forms to the young generation and labouring masses in all circumstances.

The air war of destruction (during which the Americans razed 1,589 schools) was not able to check its growth, even in places where bombings were most murderous. The schools were moved to safe areas and the classes scattered, often in underground rooms. A people's anti-aircraft defence looked after the security of teachers and students. Curricula were trimmed without, however, affecting basic scientific knowledge. A vast emulation

movement "to study and teach well" was launched. Two million and a half children were selected as "good nephews and nieces of Uncle Ho". Many young people distinguished themselves by their courage and self-denial under the bombings or in production work. 2,854 schools were recognized as "vanguard schools".

School enrolment in general education :

1964-1965	:	2,673,000
1968-1969	:	4,187,000
1969-1970	:	4,500,000

Enrolment in pre-school classes :

1964-1965	:	952,231
1969-1970	:	1,080,000

(In 1939, there were only 576,000 school students for the whole of Viet Nam, north and south).

At present, each village has a primary school ; four-fifths of them a junior high school. Each district has at least a senior high school. In many delta provinces, primary education is compulsory.

Two reforms in 1950 and 1956 and several other improvements have transformed schooling and geared it toward a socialist education. They are aimed at forming a new generation that will carry on the revolutionary work : fighters who will promote our fine national traditions and revolutionary heroism, new toilers possessed of general and technical knowledge and a good health, who will actively build socialism while standing ready to defend the Fatherland.

Schooling is related to life and to the revolutionary struggle of the people, study is linked to production work, and theory to practice. Education given at school is combined with education by society to ensure an allround formation.

Under the present circumstances we experience difficulties in the building and equipping of schools. To overcome them we call on the population to back the efforts of the State, the students and the teachers.

Education has also known rapid progress among ethnic minorities and facilitated the effective enjoyment of the right to equality among all nationalities. The government has helped the Thai, Meo, Tay and Nung devise their own scripts, which are gradually used in general and complementary education.

Great attention is paid in education to the emancipation of women. Pre-school classes, creches and kindergartens are set up to help them devote maximum time to work and rest.

The proportion of girls in school enrolment increases year after year at all levels of education.

Growth of higher education and secondary vocational education

The economic and cultural development of the country requires an ever rising number of cadres and consequently a vigorous growth of higher education and secondary vocational education.

In 1964, before US war "escalation", there were in North Viet Nam 26,000 college students and 45,000 secondary vocational school students as against 582 and 400 in 1939 for the whole of "French" Indochina.

In 1965, we moved our colleges from the towns to the countryside, scattered them and provided them with anti-aircraft shelters. The training of cadres went on smoothly. In 1968-1969, school enrolment numbered 80,000. Higher learning establishments (now 36 as against 20 in 1964) include sciences and technology, medicine and pharmacy, agronomy, forestry, animal husbandry, hydraulics, commerce, economics, finances, foreign affairs, foreign languages, pedagogy, literature, fine arts, gymnastics and sports, etc. To speedily train educational workers, teachers' colleges went up from 2 (1964-65) to 6 (1968-69) and secondary teachers' schools from 41 to 101. Other schools were opened to train teachers for complementary courses and pre-school classes.

Implementing the slogan : " The school is linked to society, life, production and struggle", we put college and secondary vocational school students on probation in factories, construction sites, State farms, agricultural co-operatives, etc. This acquaints them with practical work, with the requirements of production and national defence, gives correct orientation to their studies. It makes them more conversant with the people's feelings and aspirations, and enhances their patriotism, love for the people and faith in the building of socialism.

Moreover, we have sent thousands of students, trainees and candidates to higher degrees abroad.

Illiterate for the most part under the colonial regime our people have now a relatively developed education. On the average, one person out of three attends classes. 98 per cent of school and college students are sons and daughters of workers, peasants, State employees and armymen.

Education is given in Vietnamese at all levels, which constitutes a great revolutionary victory. Under the colonial regime, the national language was neglected, while French served as teaching medium. A considerable work of linguistic creation has been done in all fields to ensure to the Vietnamese language its rightful place in education.

B. SCIENCE

The scientific legacy handed down to the people's power was quite meagre. There was almost no research centre and a great shortage of cadres.

To make up for this lag, the DRVN government has quickly opened higher learning establishments to train scientific and technical cadres in the country and has sent students and college graduates abroad for further training.

Tens of thousands of higher and secondary cadres have thus been formed in our schools, a precious asset for the development of science and technology and the building of the country.

Scientific institutes have been set up under different ministries to conduct research and serve production, such as the Institute of Agronomy, that of Hydraulics, that of Industrial Chemistry, the General Department of Chemical Products, the Institute of Nutrition, the Technical Institute of Communications, the Institute of Tuberculosis, that of Malarialogy, Parasitology and Entomology, that of Hygiene and Epidemiology, etc.

The State Science Committee was established in 1958 to help the Government guide scientific and technical work and coordinate scientific research. In 1965, it was split into the Committee of Social Sciences and the Committee of Science and Technology, which include many institutes: the Institutes of Philosophy, Economics, History, Literature, Lingustics, Law, Archaeology, etc; and those of Weights and Measures, Natural Sciences, Oceanography, Physics, Mathematics, etc.

Besides the universities, the scientific and technical research teams in industrial and mining enterprises, and the technico-scientific teams in agricultural co-operatives also take an active part in research work.

To raise the people's scientific level, the Association for the Dissemination of Science and Technology has come into being. It has branches in all provinces and collaborators not only in research

establishments but also in industrial and mining enterprises, agricultural co-operatives, schools...

In spite of difficulties due to American aggression, research work has unceasingly developed over the last years.

Studies have been made on the natural conditions and resources of the country, on the technical problems of agricultural and industrial development. The techniques of intensive cultivation coupled with the selection of seeds have contributed to increasing the yield of rice (5 tons and more per hectare per year and various crops: sweet potato, cotton, tea, orange, pepper. Progress has been made in fish-rearing where egg-laying can be artificially stimulated, and in the exploitation and processing of aquatic products. Many species of trees have been used in re-afforestation and the technique of regeneration of forests has begun to be applied. Improved implements and mechanization have contributed to increasing labour productivity in agriculture, forestry and fishing. In industry, research has reaped success in various fields: local fuels, machines and improved implements adapted to the conditions of the country, tropicalization, equipment and raw materials for regional industry, processing and preservation of foodstuffs for the army and the civilian population.

Technical problems raised by the task of building factories in the conditions of a merciless war of destruction have been solved.

Difficulties have been overcome in the building of bridges, the repair of roads, the camouflage of means of transport, in order to ensure the continuity of communications in war time.

Successes have been scored in the struggle against epidemics and social diseases: tuberculosis, malaria, typhoid fever, diphtheria, small-pox, cholera, dysentery, poliomyelitis, trachoma, etc. The treatment of war wounds by simple and efficacious methods easy to popularize deserves especial attention. Surgery has made great progress in operations on the liver, the heart, the skull, the brain, as well as in oto-rhino-laryngology. Studies have been made to combine traditional medicine with Western medicine, to turn out drugs from local raw materials, vaccines and serums.

In the basic sciences, young talents have produced interesting theoretical works.

Scientific and technical exchanges have been established with foreign countries, especially with the socialist countries.

Delegates have been sent to various international scientific symposiums. Others have joined international scientific organizations or are members of foreign academies.

C. PRESS, RADIO AND PUBLISHING

1. The press

The authentically Vietnamese press was born of our people's revolutionary struggle.

Before the August 1945 Revolution, it was illegal, sometimes semi-legal or even legal. It contributed to éducating the masses, organizing them and leading them to struggle against the colonialists and the feudalists. The triumph of the Revolution enabled it to quickly mature and bring its action into full play.

The number of newspapers and magazines went up from 10 in 1939 to 64 in 1964. In spite of great difficulties, they kept on developing during the US war of destruction. In 1969, they numbered 135, among them 92 national papers, 35 provincial ones and 8 in foreign languages, not including mimeographed bulletins.

Our press serves the major tasks of each stage of the revolution. It reflects the new man and the new deeds, the movements of technical innovation and improvement, the best achievements in production and fighting, and the finest examples of revolutionary heroism. It thus contributes to educating the masses, stimulating and organizing them for the struggle against US aggression and the building of socialism. It calls on them to display international solidarity and support to the world peoples' struggle for national independence, democracy, peace and socialism.

The press law promulgated on May 20, 1957, guarantees freedom of opinion for the journalists and affords them most efficacious means to serve the people and the Fatherland, while prohibiting them from sowing discord among the nationalities, making war propaganda and inciting to depravation.

Supported by the people, the press unceasingly develops and goes deep into the life of the masses. Under the colonial regime, the readers were members of the upper urban strata; now they are toilers in town and countryside, school and college students, armymen. In every enterprise, government office, army unit, school, co-operative... newspapers are read to groups of people during breaks.

The most widely-read dailies and periodicals are: *Nhan Dan* (People), *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* (People's Army), Thong Nhat (Reunification), *Lao Dong* (Labour), *Tien Phong* (Vanguard), *Phu Nu* (Women), *Van Nghe* (Literature and Art), *Hanoi Moi* (New Hanoi), *Haiphong*...

Among the reviews: *Hoc Tap* (Studies), *Tuyen Huan* (Political Education), *Tap Chi Quan Doi* (Army's Review) and other specialized periodicals: Economic Studies, Literary Studies, Historical Studies...

For foreign readers, *Vietnamese Studies* and *Viet Nam Courier* are published in English and French, the pictorial *Viet Nam* in Russian, Chinese, Spanish, English and French.

Most of the papers have a vast network of correspondents among workers, peasants, armymen...

A college of journalism has been established. Moreover, the journalists can follow short-term refresher courses while working.

Founded in 1948 in the crucible of the war of Resistance against the French colonialists, the Vietnamese Journalists' Association has been affiliated since 1950 to the International Journalists' Association. Also a member of the Afro-Asian Journalists' Association, it pledges to fight together with progressive journalists against imperialism and colonialism old and new.

The Viet Nam News Agency, set up in the very first days of the people's power, is the official information service of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. It maintains contact with many foreign agencies.

2. Radio broadcasting

On September 7, 1945, only a few days after the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, **The Voice of Viet Nam** broadcast the Proclamation of Independence from Hanoi on a transmitter formerly used by the French colonialists for commercial communications between Hanoi and Saigon. With the outbreak of the first War of Resistance (1946-1954) it had to leave the capital. It carried on its broadcasts from the Viet Bac base on three wave lengths, in spite of many enemy raids. In the South, four transmitter stations came successively into operation, thus efficaciously contributing to the patriotic struggle.

After the restoration of peace, all these stations merged into one, *The Voice of Viet Nam*, now equipped with new, powerful transmitters.

At present *The Voice of Viet Nam* broadcasts round the clock on three wave lengths in nine languages, besides Vietnamese.

It is a member of the International Radio and Television Broadcasting Organization and has connections with radio stations in many countries, particularly in the socialist countries. Every day it receives an abundant mail from its foreign listeners.

A few years ago, two stations were set up in the Viet Bac and North-West autonomous regions for the national minorities. Their

transmissions, given mainly in the latter's languages give pride of place to regional information.

Within a few years following North Viet Nam's liberation, the DRVN government, helped by the fraternal socialist countries, established a public-address system in all major towns, factories, State farms and most of the agricultural co-operatives. By the end of 1964, 1,550 networks with 16,000 kilometres of wire had been laid.

The public-address system ensures the relaying of *The Voice of Viet Nam* and inform the population of regional activities. It efficaciously contributes to impelling the emulation movement in production and struggle against US aggression, and disseminating science and technology.

Between 1965 and 1970, the public-address system extended to the villages and hamlets of the delta and coastal zone. It timely informed the population of the movements of enemy planes and warships, our fighting and victories, the crimes committed by the adversary... It greatly contributed to organizing the people's anti-aircraft defence and mobilizing the people's militia against enemy planes and warships.

3. Publishing

Since 1945, great efforts have been made in the publication and distribution of books and newspapers to meet the growing needs of the population, especially during the US war of destruction.

A mere 1,570,000 copies in 1939 under French domination, the number of books published totalled 23,287,000 copies in 1964 and 37,384,000 in 1969. Publishing has closely followed and efficaciously served the tasks of each revolutionary period.

From August 1945 to the end of the first War of Resistance, many political works were published: Marxist-Leninist classics, works by President Ho Chi Minh and other Party and State leaders dealing with armed struggle and production. Novels, stories, reminiscences, poems, songs... extolling patriotism and determination to win also accounted for a big part of the publications.

After 1954, with socialist building in North Viet Nam, scientific and technical text-books, and literary, philosophic, economic, and linguistic studies have multiplied and taken an ever increasing share. In 1965, a series of works by Party and State leaders on the struggle against US aggression were published.

At present, there are 16 publishing houses in Hanoi and two others in the Tay Bac and Viet Bac autonomous regions. **Su That** (Truth) is among the biggest. The Foreign Languages Publishing House turns out books in Russian, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, German and Esperanto.

The Party and the State pay great attention to the distribution of books and newspapers in order to create every facility for the readers. A distribution service functions in the provinces and in the major towns. Each district centre has a bookshop. In some villages the marketing cooperatives are at the same time agencies for book distribution. There are also distributors in construction sites, enterprises and schools. During the four years of the US war of destruction, even in the worst hit places, not only staple consumer goods but also books and newspapers were brought to the fighting posts of the people's militia and the army.

The Viet Nam Service for the Import and Export of Books and Periodicals (Xunhasaba) maintains commercial relations with more than 60 countries in the world.

At the 1960 International Book Fair in Leipzig the books published in the first War of Resistance were awarded a gold medal.

D. LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

1. Libraries

Before the August 1945 Revolution, the whole of Indochina had only four libraries — in Hanoi, Hue, Saigon and Phnom Penh — placed under the control of the Hanoi Central Library. According to 1939 statistics, the latter had 92,612 books.

During the War of Resistance against the French colonialists, a library was rapidly set up in the Viet Bac mountainous region, which gathered over 20,000 books covering various branches of knowledge, particularly the political, military and economic sciences. In other localities there functioned libraries of lesser importance constituted by cases of books which could be easily moved about.

In 1954, the Hanoi Central Library became the DRVN National Library.

Its stock of books and periodicals has been rapidly enlarged from 100,000 books in 1954 to more than one million at present. The periodicals have gone up from 1,883 to 4,000 titles. The percentage of Vietnamese books and periodicals has increased at an accelerated tempo. The new stock of foreign books and periodicals has been

enlarged through both purchase and exchange. Special stocks have been set up: works in Oriental languages, those of ethnic minorities, rare books, maps, engravings, gramophone records.

The National Library also keeps all the books and periodicals published in Indochina for nearly a century under colonial rule.

The National Library registers 1,000 visits a day on the average and 350,000 books lent out a year. Besides the National Library there functions a Central Scientific Library with two sections: natural and social sciences.

There are, moreover, 34 libraries in cities and provinces, 102 reading rooms in urban quarters or district towns and over 20,000 libraries in the countryside or at basic level. Public libraries alone contain over 6 million books, that is 7 books for every 10 people upward of 8 years of age.

To this network of public libraries must be added those of scientific bodies, army units and trade unions.

Relations between our National Library and foreign national librairies began in 1955 with the socialist countries. Since then they have been extended to Asian, African, Latin American and other countries: Britain, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Australia, Italy, Canada... 48 countries in all.

The National Library and the town and provincial libraries in North Viet Nam are building up a special stock of books and periodicals destined for the towns and provinces of South Viet Nam. These "solidarity libraries" have so far gathered more than half a million volumes.

The salient feature of our library service is its mass character. Its slogan is: "Bring the books to the readers so that they read them and act upon them". Various ways have been devised to get as many books distributed to as many readers as possible.

Reading is closely linked to life and production. People read not only in libraries and at school, but also in enterprises and cooperatives, at home, at the barber's while waiting for one's turn, in the shade of a banian while having a smoke or a cup of tea... Reading has become a habit. A book is no more a luxury as under colonial rule but a mentor and a friend.

* * *

To cope with American aggression the Library Service has been reorganized.

The public libraries in the capital as well as in the provinces have ingeniously faced the new situation: evacuation and maintenance of rare and valuable stocks, dispersal of stocks for public reading. Grouped into mobile brigades, our cadres have gone to the fighting units, production bases, agricultural cooperatives. Collective reading followed by commentaries enhances patriotism, vigilance, creativeness, while acquainting the population with the heroic deeds of our armed forces and the experience of people's anti-aircraft defence.

At the National Library, the reading and documentation section has adapted itself to the situation in a timely way. Through a system of relays and liaison, evacuated books can be lent to research workers. The training of cadres has been carried out at an increased tempo.

The library service has known since the cessation of the bombings a new development through an enlargement of the foreign scientific and technical stock. On the other hand, it has set about perfecting the work of libraries by the creation of study commissions, the organization of seminars and the founding of the Association of Vietnamese library workers.

2. Museums

The people's State carefully looks after historical and cultural remains to preserve ancient legacies and extol national traditions.

Three museums were founded in the capital in the first years of peace: the Historical Museum, the Museum of the Revolution and the Army Museum. In 1966 the Art Museum opened its doors in the midst of the US war of destruction.

Other museums of various sizes have been built in the provinces. A number of villages which distinguished themselves in the struggle against the colonialists and the feudalists also have their "houses of traditions".

The museums usually preserve vestiges of our thousands-of-years-old history and national culture, the crimes of the feudalists and foreign invaders, the uprisings of our fathers, etc. Some feature current problems: life under the feudal-colonial regime and that under the people's democratic regime, collective and individual agricultural exploitation, achievements in socialist building.

During the American war of destruction, the larger museums have evacuated a part of the exhibits and put copies or photos in their place. They have organized mobile groups to hold roving expositions in production bases, government offices, Army units. They have also sent cadres to the villages to help set up "houses of traditions" in order to instil patriotism and revolutionary heroism into the people, activate the organization of people's defence, disseminate science and technique, impel production, propagate ways of the new life, and contribute to forming the new man.

From a score in 1964, the number of museums went up to 100 in 1966 and 142 in 1969. In 1968, the Museum of the Revolution, the Historical Museum and the Army Museum recorded 328,440 visits, an increase of 19 per cent over 1967.

The historical and cultural remains sabotaged by the colonialists or deteriorated by the climate have been restored. American aggression has set complex problems of preservation. The more exposed remains have had to be camouflaged while others required special means of protection. Those which could be moved away have been evacuated and replaced by copies or reproductions. Photos and drawings have been made to make it possible to restore the remains when necessary.

Worthy of notice is the fact that the population actively collaborate with the services of preservation to protect historical remains, monuments and sites.

Together with the provincial Cultural Services, the University, the Institute of Archaeology, the Service of Preservation of Historical Remains and Museums have discovered several paleolithic (Nui Do in Thanh Hoa province), neolithic (in Vinh Phu province) and Bronze Age sites (Vinh Phu province and Thieu Duong), as well as bones of primitive men in Cuc Phuong forest (Ninh Binh province).

Studies have been made concerning several historical sites: Co Loa (Hanoi), Pho Hien (Hung Yen), Van Don (Quang Ninh), Tot Dong and Ha Hoi (Ha Tay), and on various themes like the primitive commune under the Hong Bang Kings, the Van Lang State, the history of Hanoi, the workers' movement in the mining area.

E. LITERATURE

The Vietnamese literary patrimony is old and original. Imbued with patriotic and humanitarian feelings, it reflects the fight of the whole nation against foreign invasions and the persevering efforts of our people — peasants for the most part — to get rid of

feudal oppression and tame a hostile nature no less redoubtable in its manifestations.

This struggle is first expressed in an oral *folk literature* to which belongs a series of legends on the origin of our people or on the struggle against natural calamities (*History of the Hong Bang Dynasty, The Water Genie and the Mountain Genie*) as well as accounts of the fabulous deeds of the knight-peasant *Thach Sanh* and legends of national heroes like the exploits of *Thanh Giong*, a child who rode an iron horse and routed an army of invaders. Thousands of tales deal with family tragedies like *Tam* (the Vietnamese Cinderella) *and Cam*, and with old habits and customs: *Trau, Cau* (betel and areca), *Banh day, Banh chung* (rice cakes), which they try to explain.

The people's common sense can be seen in countless funny stories where the hypocrisy, immorality and ignorance of mandarins, headmen, fortune-tellers and other profiteers of public credulity are pilloried. Nothing is sacred for the peasant weighed down by the feudal hierarchy, whose irreverent mischievousness takes pleasure in dragging the mighty into funny, more or less vulgar, adventures.

The people's wisdom appears also in innumerable sayings, proverbs most often in verse, and in folk-songs whose development is due to the richness in tones and the musicality of the Vietnamese language.

The national minorities have also oral epics praising man's courage in face of hostile nature, like *Dam San* (Ede nationality), *Xing Nha* (Gia Lai nationality), novels in verse extolling faithfulness in love or telling about love hampered by feudal customs, like *Song Chu Xon Xao* (Thai nationality) and *Nam Kiu Thi Dan* (Muong nationality).

This oral literature is not only the fountain-head of written literature. It contributes to forming little by little the Vietnamese character, whose outstanding features are courage and perseverance.

Written literature began in Viet Nam with the use of Chinese ideograms, adopted by the monarchy as official script. Classical Chinese was the cultural language common to all countries of Eastern Asia, like Latin in Europe. One of the most ancient literary texts handed down to us dates as far back as 1010. It is the *Thien Do Chieu*, Proclamation on the Transfer of the Capital (to

the present site of Hanoi) by Ly Thai To, the founder of the first independent centralized monarchy which favoured the growth of Vietnamese culture.

Writing with the ideographic script, many authors expressed our unshakable determination to defend our freedom. The generals who led the wars of national resistance were great authors of their time. In 1076, Ly Thuong Kiet (1019-1105) had this quatrain circulated among his troops before a decisive battle:

Over the Southern mountains and rivers, the Emperor of the South reigns,
This was written down in the Book of Heaven.
How dare those barbarians invade our soil?
They will surely meet with defeat.

It was the first Declaration of Independence of the Vietnamese people.

Likewise Tran Quoc Tuan made a proud proclamation to his men before a battle against the Mongols in 1285. Nguyen Trai also used Chinese ideograms for his *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, a proclamation of victory over the Ming (1427) — a "model of eloquence for all times," said our scholars — which extolled the independence won after ten years of hard struggle.

Parallelly, literature written in Vietnamese appeared at a very early date and made rapid progress.

The origin of the first national script derived from Chinese ideograms, the *nom*, is not clearly known. According to ancient historians, at the beginning of the 12th century, poet Nguyen Thuyen was the first man to adapt the rules of Chinese prosody to Vietnamese poetry.

The most ancient collection of Vietnamese poems so far preserved is the *Quoc Am Thi Tap* (Poems in the National Language). This collection of 250 poems laid the foundations of the national literary language; its author is Nguyen Trai (1380-1442), the victor over the Ming.

A great politician, strategist and thinker, the poet incarnated patriotism, love of peace and respect for human dignity. He also wrote in classical Chinese. His *Quan Trung Tu Menh Tap* (Collection of Writings made while in the Army) is mostly a collection of appeals to beleaguered enemy generals to surrender. While his writings in classical Chinese, like his *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, reflected the great events of the time, his poems in Vietnamese revealed the purity and simplicity of his mind, saddened by the ingratitude of the ruling monarchy.

The appearance of *nom*, the quick growth of the literature written in that demotic script and the wide distribution of these works testified to a rapid awakening of the national feeling.

Vietnamese classical literature blossomed with the development of two currents at the end of the 18th century and in the first half of the 19th century.

The greatest Vietnamese classical poet, Nguyen Du (1765-1820) lived in this period. The author of many works of repute written in classical Chinese, he devoted all his talent to the elaboration of his masterpiece, *Kieu*, entirely written in Vietnamese according to folk prosody, in 6-syllable verses alternating with 8-syllable ones. It is a long novel in verse relating the tribulations of a girl from a good family, victim of mandarin arbitrariness, who was forced to sell herself and experience the worst sufferings. Transcending the misfortunes of beautiful Kieu, the novel is a stern condemnation of feudal society.

Kieu will remain the apex of Vietnamese classical poetry.[1]

Nguyen Du's period was one of great social upheavals. The peasantry rose up almost continually. Influenced by these events, a realistic and national trend appeared in literature. Female talent came to light. Let us mention Doan Thi Diem and her remarkable *Chinh Phu Ngam* (Laments of a Warrior's Wife), Thanh Quan and her poems of a purely classical style, and especially Ho Xuan Huong who, using a bold language, vigorously attacked the hypocrisy of feudal society.

The nineteenth century was a turning point for Vietnamese letters. The test of strength with European capitalism ended with the capitulation of the monarchy in the second half of the century. Some popular leaders supported by the population organized the resistance. In Nam Bo where the banner of resistance was first raised, a *patriotic literary movement* took shape, whose most illustrious representative was Nguyen Dinh Chieu (1822-1888), the famous blind poet. He was the bard of those intrepid peasants who, armed with mere bamboo spears, attacked the French invaders.

At the same time a satirical current emerged, which derided the new order established by the occupiers. Poets Nguyen Khuyen and Tran Te Xuong pitilessly castigated its more ridiculous manifestations.

1. The World Peace Council celebrated Nguyen Du's bicentenary in 1965. See Nguyen Khac Vien's French translation of Kieu. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1965.

With the twentieth century and the development of the colonial economy, the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie came on the stage at the same time as the proletariat. European bourgeois democratic ideas began to take root. National feeling surged up. Thanks to the romanization of the script literary works became a weapon to disseminate patriotic ideas. Young literati were drawn into this new struggle.

Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940) became "the soul of the anti-French movement" at the beginning of the century. His militant works, inspired with an ardent love for the Fatherland, urged national union to save the country.

Vietnamese literature gradually modernized itself.

After 1930, depressed by repeated political and economic setbacks, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie gave up its revolutionary stand to take the path of collaboration. Pessimistic romantic tendencies appeared in legal literature. However, a current connected with critical realism flowed from the pen of various writers sympathetic to the misery of the toiling masses : Ngo Tat To, Nam Cao, Nguyen Cong Hoan, Nguyen Hong and the satirical poet Tu Mo.

Also starting in 1930, the newly-founded Indochinese Communist Party took over the leadership of the national movement. Under its impulse, literature and art directly participated in the revolutionary struggle. A *proletarian revolutionary* current which began with the writings and poems of the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement kept on growing.

In 1943, the Party issued its "Theses on Cultural Policy" in which it advocated a national, popular and scientific culture. Cultural associations for national salvation were set up, uniting patriotic and progressive writers and calling on them to work for national salvation.

This revolutionary literature won great success right from the start.

Prison Diary is a collection of poems written in Chinese characters and composed by President Ho Chi Minh when he was detained in Chiang Kai-shek jails in 1942-1943. These short and incisive poems reveal a great poet as well as a pure and dauntless heart.

Tu Ay (Since then) is a collection of poems written by To Huu in the period from 1937 to 1946. Purity of expression, fervour of accent, proletarian conception of the world, loyalty to the Party — such are the characteristics of this remarkable work.

The August Revolution opened a new chapter of the national literature, creating favourable conditions for its full bloom.

Gathered under the Party's banner the writers devote all their talents to the struggle for national liberation and the construction of socialism. By their writings, President Ho Chi Minh and other Party leaders help them build a humanitarian, national, realistic and popular literature.

Most of the writers of renown have joined the revolution. Young talents emerge, even among some national minorities for whose languages scripts have only recently been devised. Progress is made in various literary genres.

Famous ancient works have been carefully studied and have gained new strength. Likewise, translations acquaint the people with masterpieces of world literature.

While between 1945 and 1954 our literature reflected in the main our people's life during the War of Resistance against French aggression, between 1954 and 1964 its themes were the problems of socialist construction and struggle for national reunification. Since 1965, it praises the revolutionary heroism of our people engaged in an epic combat against American aggression.

Since the August 1945 Revolution our literature has been characterized by love for the Fatherland and socialism, anti-imperialist feelings, and at the same time lofty ideals of proletarian internationalism. The beauty of the Vietnamese land, the image of the new man — courageous and hard working, inspired by noble feelings — pervade these works.

In poetry, let us first of all mention President Ho Chi Minh whose every poem deeply reflects the national consciousness.

Other Party and State leaders have also composed remarkable poems.

In his works *(Viet Bac, Gio Long...)* To Huu expresses the people's feelings at each stage of the revolution.

A Pleiad of poets from the pre-Revolutionary period find a new inspiration. The poetry of Xuan Dieu and Huy Can expresses itself in striking images when handling various themes. Che Lan Vien writes his meditations in a richly coloured style. Te Hanh deals more particularly with feelings toward the South. Luu Trong Lu, Anh Tho, and many others have seen their talents mature.

Among the poets who have distinguished themselves after the Revolution are Nguyen Dinh Thi who writes in a concise and moving style, Hoang Trung Thong, whose poems show great vigour, and Tran Huu Thung who draws his inspiration from the peasants life and whose works remind one of folk-poems.

Sprung from the national monorities are Nong Quoc Chan (Tay nationality) and Ban Tai Doan (Zao nationality) whose poems display simplicity, originality and wit.

Satirical poetry has many adepts, Tu Mo, Xich Dieu and Tho Ren being among the best.

Prose (novels, stories, reportages, essays) has experienced a veritable blossoming, particularly since 1954. Gifted writers of the pre-1945 period keep on producing valuable works. The late Nam Cao was the author of many well-composed stories in which colonialists and puppets are pilloried or regressive-minded elements exposed. The late Nguyen Huy Tuong was a chronicler of the War of Resistance while To Hoai depicts the social struggle among the minorities and the new life in the mountainous areas. Nguyen Hong has written many novels on life under colonial rule. Bui Hien has distinguished himself in stories on most various themes. Others, like Nguyen Cong Hoan, have written novels on the evils of the old society.

Among the outstanding novelists after 1945 are Nguyen Dinh Thi He devotes his vigorous talents to serving the fighters of the People's Army *(Xung Kich, Vao Lua, Mat Tran Tren Cao)*. While tackling topical problems he has also tried to cover a long period under the old regime *(Vo Bo)*. For his part, Vo Huy Tam dedicates his talents to the miners *(Vung Mo)*. Nguyen Van Bong praises the guerillas in the War of Resistance *(Con Trau)*. Tran Dang who died a young man, left valuable stories. A writer of wide- ranging gifts, Nguyen Khai treats many delicate subjects set by daily life. Nguyen Ngoc has made himself known by an epic on hero Noup and the wild mountains of Tay Nguyen. Other writers, like Bui Duc Ai, Le Kham, Nguyen Dich Zung, Chu Van, Vu Thi Thuong are among the favourites of the public. The national minorities are represented by Nong Quoc Chan.

Reminiscences on the revolution such as *Bat Khuat, Bac Ho, Nhan Dan Ta Rat Anh Hung* captivate the readers.

Invigorated by the revolutionary struggles, Vietnamese literature has known a true Renaissance.

F. PLASTIC ARTS — MUSIC AND DANCE

1. Plastic arts

Vietnamese plastic arts rightly claim millenary and original traditions. Figures carved on cave walls as well as decorative designs on ancient pottery recently unearthed testify to prehistoric

man's good taste, inventive spirit, and intelligence, while vigour and simplicity of form confer undeniable beauty on his "earthenware".

Small-sized articles of current use in most cases, the figurines of the bronze age — human figures kneeling, carrying a companion pick-a-back or playing a Pan pipe — bear the stamp of deep realism. The motifs on the bronze drums and the perfect casting technique of the founders are concrete manifestations of a decisive stage in the evolution of Vietnamese plastic arts. Such scenes as boat-racing and rice-pounding can be regarded as carvings in relief, reduced in size and concise in content : their anecdotic value is well served by simple but thorough stylization and a vision of the world that is now global now concerned with the least detail. The abundance of animal motifs — stags, fish, birds — whose evocative power is enhanced by the simplicity of stylized features, testifies to the keen eyes of those anonymous masters who, faced with the difficulties raised by practical problems of disposition and distribution of themes, succeeded in working out ingenious and often unexpected solutions.

The 11th and 12th centuries mark the beginnings of a new era for Vietnamese art. In the previous centuries, Chinese influence had been very great in the cultural field. Plastic inspiration, however, continued to be drawn from indigenous sources which provided the main elements for the crystallization of an art form expressing the people's joy at newly - regained independence. Unfortunately, from this first period of national independence there remain only a small number of art objects, mostly ceramics and stone carvings. Buddha statues, decorated pedestals, bases of pillars, baked bricks, crockery. These rare vestiges are sufficient evidence of an art full of graceful movement and rhythm. Its head emerging from a maze of details, the dragon of this period stretches itself out in harmonious and almost regular curves, its tapering body bringing out its vigour. Plates, bowls, pots, teapots... with almost diaphanous celadon coating, evoke by their shapes and designs a lotus flower often reduced to its petals.

The artistic forms which prevailed in the following period (13th, 14th, 15th centuries) are characterized by a freer, more vigorous interpretation. The dragon no longer spread in endless curves, its head was depicted in less detail, its body grew shorter and displayed greater vigour and strength. A new equilibrium came out in tree and plant motifs, now arranged in big splashes and large masses. Restraint and vigour are also displayed in the impressive

simplicity of stone architecture of which the Ho citadel (Thanh Hoa) remains the sole vestige.

Throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Vietnamese art slowly attained to diversity. Departing sometimes from elaborate forms, from this "finiteness" tinged with gravity which it had reached, it often went back to a somewhat hasty, rustic style, full of zest and humour. Although tradition-bound, it seemed on many occasions intent on breaking its bonds, escaping from pre-established frames, rejecting all conformism, eager to take flight. In most cases, fortunately, realistic vitality was preserved, folkloric elements highlighted, and the popular character underlined. Sculpture and architecture, many achievements of which have been preserved, were skilfully combined in the building of communal houses and Buddhist temples. Only a few examples remain. The prevailing genre is obviously statuary. The "Buddha with a Thousand Eyes and a Thousand Arms" (in But Thap pagoda) and the many Arhats (in Tay Phuong pagoda) are real masterpieces. Wood carvings in high relief bathe in an atmosphere of poetic innocence where folkloric naivety blends with lyricism.

During the 19th century, under the Nguyen dynasty and later on, under the French colonialists' rule, Viet Nam was no longer in a position to keep intact the elements which had contributed to the formation of her national art. Closely linked to imperial constructions, art evoked in many aspects such or such foreign style. But the folkloric current did not dry up. Along with official productions and in spite of them, anonymous works saw the light of day. In bamboo-girdled villages, folk arts, nurtured by the peasant masses, continued to develop. Folk coloured engravings are but one typical manifestation of this enduring current.

With the victory of the August Revolution (1945), Vietnamese plastic arts entered an entirely new stage. The artists faced vast and radiant prospects. Early in 1946, there took place in Hanoi the vernissage of the first painting and sculpture exhibition of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The first War of Resistance was a test for our artists: for the first time, they consciously assumed the noble task of reflecting in the language of the plastic arts the many aspects of the people's life in a national-liberation war. Local or national exhibitions were held in Viet Bac and other guerilla zones. The least exacting genres, which could adapt themselves the more readily to the hard conditions of life in the jungle, were particularly encouraged. Roving teams presented to the public sketches, drawings in panels, and posters. Indian ink, water colour, pencil, pen, were the commonest means of expression. So were, to a lesser degree, wood engraving and lithography. Neither oil nor lacquer painting was forgotten and, despite countless difficulties, sculptures in the round and low-reliefs were not lacking. Mention must be made of the black-and-white and coloured sketches by the late To Ngoc Van.

The period of peaceful construction of the country which started in 1954 offered favorable conditions to artistic work. On the strength of sketches drawn since the first years of the war, Vietnamese artists produced more elaborate works. They now had the needed perspective and sufficient means to produce paintings whose composition, colours, vision and dimensions far exceeded the possibilities of drawings and sketches of the previous period. Many painters found in traditional lacquer their favourite means of expression. But oil-painting, silk-painting, wood engraving, gouache were not neglected. In exhibitions there appeared more and more sculptures in the round and particularly panels in high-relief.

The Party's cultural policy activates and stimulates the artists' creative work and the Association of Plastic Art Workers plays a most active role. The artists realize their responsibilities and right place in the common work of socialist building. This commitment undoubtedly accounts for their technical maturation which has resulted in a blossoming of works characterized by profound sincerity and significance. Many of them have honourably stood the test of international exhibitions and several have been awarded prizes. "Scenes of Irrigation" (lacquer by Tran Van Can), "Militia-woman" (sketch for oil painting by Tran Van Can), "Bare Hands against Heavy Guns" (lacquer by Huynh Van Gam), "Vinh Moc Hamlet" (Coromandel lacquer by Huynh Van Thuan), "Buffalo Calf" (lacquer by Nguyen Tu Nghiem), "Afternoon in the Northwest" (lacquer by Phan Ke An), "Dawn on the Farm" (lacquer by Nguyen Duc Nung), "Village on Fire" (lacquer by Nguyen Sang), "Thatch cottage and Jackfruit-tree" (lacquer by Nguyen Van Ty), "Mutual-aid Team (lacquer by Hoang Tich Chu) are among the best works.

However, since 1964, American aggression has completely changed the conditions of artistic work. Once again our painters and sculptors started going to the frontline or to regions most exposed to enemy bombings, to find among the people in struggle the emotion and the material needed for the creation of new works. In the hard school of the second War of Resistance, the artists

have grown up at the same pace as those they depict. This work style which links the artist to the citizen, the painter to his model, art to real life has already borne fruit in the plastic arts, to which the public at large has granted a most hearty welcome.

In the midst of the war, the Institute of Plastic Arts came into being: the Museum attached to the Institute opened its doors in mid-1966. The College of Fine Arts continues to train young plastic art workers, in day classes and evening courses. Its secondary and primary sections keep on dispensing an artistic education adapted to the youngsters and children. The Secondary School of Applied Arts has been upgraded into a College. The percentage of students from the South and the ethnic minorities is on the increase.

The war creates almost insurmountable difficulties. Nevertheless, each term sees an exhibition, a review or an especial exhibition opened in Hanoi or other centres. Besides war scenes, masterly genre-sketches find their rightful places among more elaborate works. A striking event was perhaps the appearance of monumental statuary: the group erected at Nam Ngan (near Ham Rong bridge, in the Fourth Zone), at a time when American aviation was on the rampage, was but a first example, soon followed by others.

No wonder that in this atmosphere, Vietnamese artists strive to offer to an eager public ever more valuable works of art. A modest, but very concrete contribution to the national liberation struggle now taking place throughout Viet Nam.

2. Music and dance

The Vietnamese people possess a rich treasury of songs and dances. However, under feudal and colonial rule, they had no chance to flourish.

The August 1945 Revolution broke the fetters which hampered the development of the arts. Song and dance ensembles were set up. During the First War of Resistance, they performed in small groups in the countryside, in jungle arsenals, in the army, and even in guerilla zones behind enemy lines. Despite countless hardships and difficulties, malaria fits and enemy raids, our artistes sang and danced to stimulate the people's zeal for production and fighting.

1954 ushered in a new period when songs and dances have gradually become a national, modern and socialist art.

The national heritage has been restored and enriched. Thousands of folk songs and pieces of folk music have been collected. Traditional musical instruments have been renovated and traditional-style orchestras reconstituted. On the strength of the national artistic patrimony, our cadres and artistes have created new genres more apt to reflect the new life. They have also assimilated the best traditions of progressive music and choreography in the world and composed valuable works: trios, quartets, sonatas, concertos, symphonic poems and suites, cantatas, operas, oratorios, ballets...

A music Institute has been set up. The Viet Nam Song Dance and Music Theatre, the Symphonic Theatre composed of a symphonic orchestra, a choir and an opera and ballet troupe have been founded. A system of schools has been opened in the capital and the provinces, teaching music and dance from the elementary to the higher levels. Each region, each province and each town, the army and all branches of activities have their own artistic ensembles.

Music brings an increasing contribution to the cinema, theatre, ballet, puppet show, circus... and penetrates into the people's daily life.

Imbued with the Party's cultural line, our composers, artistes and cadres have built for themselves a revolutionary ideology and world outlook. Over the past twenty-five years they have striven to overcome professional and organizational difficulties and to combat the influence of backward concepts. They have endeavoured to mingle with the people so as to give a true and stirring image of the Vietnamese in their construction of socialism and struggle for national reunification.

Another feature of Vietnamese art is the direct and active participation of the masses. "Art belongs to the people, it stems from them and serves them". Nearly all agricultural and industrial production bases, public services, schools and army units have their own groups of song and dance.

Amateur Festivals have been regularly organized. Close relations link amateurs to professionals. When the latter go to production bases, they help the former with advice or short-term courses. Our cadres have acquainted the masses with the best

national and foreign works. Many amateur artistes full of promise have emerged and joined the ranks of the professionals.

This mass movement has not been hampered by US bombings. Acting up to the motto "Let our songs drows the thunder of their bombs", song and dance troupes have continued to perform, either in full strength on in small groups, everywhere: fields, workshops, artillery emplacements, decks of naval craft, even newly-dug bomb craters.

The arts of the national minorities have kept pace with the general development and contributed to enrich the Vietnamese art which has thus taken on a multinational character.

Some Vietnamese musical compositions and modern dances, impregnated with high combative spirit, have been warmly praised not only in Viet Nam but also in many foreign countries, and have won prizes at international festivals.

G. THEATRE AND CINEMA

1. The theatre

The Vietnamese theatre comprises several genres.

Popular opera (hat cheo), the oldest genre, originates from mimes accompanied with folk songs and dances. Peasants of the Red River delta continually improved it for over one thousand years. A mixture of scholarly literature and popular speech, it drew its themes from daily life and lashed at the most sacrosanct feudal values through the acting of the clowns.

The popular opera needed neither elevated stage nor settings. The spectators stood around, in the courtyard of the village communal house where performances usually took place. Sitting in a corner, the musicians accompanied the singers and played the role of a collective partner, accentuating a stage effect or commenting upon the acting.

The feudalists hated the *hat cheo* while fearing its great influence upon the public. In 1437, a royal edict forbade it, but it remained none the less in existence. After the August 1945 Revolution it has experienced a spectacular renewal.

Puppet shows have known glorious days. As early as the 11th century, it was part of village festivities.

We have a quite original variety of water puppets. Combined with Bengal lights, performances constitute an enchanting sight.

The themes as well as the songs are drawn from the *hat cheo* repertory. Made of wood, the puppets are moved through a rather complicated mechanism.

Puppet shows attract a vast public, made up of grown-ups as well as children.

Classical opera (hat tuong) was favoured by the intelligentsia and the aristocracy. It probably began in 1182 with the staging of real personages of the Court. For centuries it dealt with dynastic stories and praised loyalty to the king.

The art of the *hat tuong* lies in subtle rules. Each gesture has a precise significance which one must know in order to follow the character's behaviour in the unfolding of the action. This rigour of conventional rules accounted for the slow evolution of the *hat tuong*.

However, one can find in its repertory several pieces with an unquestionable popular inspiration, akin to the *hat cheo*. Rated as of lesser importance, these plays display a real critical spirit.

Reformed opera (hat cai luong) came into being in 1918 in South Viet Nam in the midst of a musical renaissance. In its efforts at modernization the *hat cai luong* has given a more important place to declaimed dialogue and adopted Western stage devices. No longer performed in the open but in theatres, its shows are enhanced by elaborate decor. Most of the plays deal with topical problems, but stories of the past are not neglected. Its repertory also includes foreign themes.

Spoken drama (kich noi) resembles modern plays in other countries. Born under French influence the *kich noi* began with a translation of Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire* in 1920. For a long time it did not enjoy the public's favour, featuring neither songs nor dances. It was only in the War of Resistance against the French colonialists that the *kich noi* truly conquered the stage.

The Vietnamese theatre has evinced strong vitality, even under the old regime when the actors were looked down upon. During the Second World War many actors had to leave the stage for lack of jobs.

The August 1945 Revolution instilled new energy into our theatre. At present, it has become a mass movement which involves factories and cooperatives. Every village has its own amateur troupe. A secondary theatrical school in Hanoi trains stage directors, actors and musicians. In the provinces short-term courses are held for amateurs. Measures have been taken to enable the actors to improve their ideology and knowledge.

A study centre has been established to conduct theoretical, historical and artistic researches in Viet Nam's various theatrical genres. On the strength of a thorough study of the peculiarities of our theatre, our cadres are trying to work out a judicious orientation for its modernization.

Foreign masterpieces have also been successfully staged.

2. The cinema

On September 2, 1945, the day of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the production of a documentary on the celebration of Independence marked the first steps of the young Vietnamese cinema.

A militant cinema linked to life

In 1948, spurred by the requirements of the War of Resistance against the French colonialists, some Nam Bo photographers strove to found a national cinema for the people in arms. Having no dark rooms, they used big jars instead. The ice needed for film processing was brought in from the cities in spite of enemy control. The films they shot at the risk of their lives were developed and edited on board river boats. They succeeded in producing newsreels and documentaries which stimulated the population, such as *The Battle of Moc Hoa, The Battle of La Nga, A Printing-house in the War of Resistance, An Arms-workshop in the Eighth Zone.*

After 1950, with Soviet and Chinese help, the Vietnamese cinema workers could carry on their work in better conditions. But the

war imposed upon them most severe restrictions. By dint of ingenuity and perseverance, they overcame the lack of equipment and managed to add a sound track to their 16-mm. film. *The Battle of the Frontier, The Volunteer Carriers at the Front, The Victory of the Northwest* came successively into being and showed ever better quality.

On March 15, 1953, President Ho Chi Minh signed a decree setting up the Cinema Service.

The Victory of Dien Bien Phu soon crowned all these efforts. This long documentary marked the end of that heroic period of the Vietnamese cinema.

Since 1954, the film workers have emphasized the combativeness and political content of their production. They have depicted on the screen the new man on the production front, hard-working and vigilant.

Water Arrives at Bac Hung Hai, awarded a gold medal at the Moscow Film Festival, is a hymn to collective labour. *Stages of History, Under the Invincible Banner,* and especially *Scenes of President Ho Chi Minh's Militant Life* confirm the talents of our producers. War newsreels: *Victories at Quang Binh, A Well-deserved Punishment to the Pirates* deal with the riposte to US air forces during the first days of US war escalation. Other films setting off our people's revolutionary heroism were made in the same period such as *On the Crest of the Waves, The Road-builders, Those of Ham Rong, Immortal Nguyen Van Troi, Aim Straight at the Enemy.*

The first feature film dealt with the struggle for the reunification of the country: *Of the Same River* (1959). Since then, about thirty others have been made, drawing their themes from the War of Resistance against the French colonialists, the struggle against US aggression, and the building of socialism. The productions although linked to topical problems are more than topical works.

Over the past ten years or so, there have appeared animated cartoons, puppet and paper-cut films for children. Shaking off established conventions, our cinema workers have drawn their themes from practical reality in order to give a revolutionary education to children.

Science films propagate indispensable knowledge, especially agricultural techniques.

A cinema which penetrates into the masses

One single projection team in 1945, 900 at present — such is the road travelled by our young cinema.

Carrying their equipment on bicycles or on their backs, these teams roam the country, from the mountainous region to the coast where screens are set up on fishermen's boats. To cope with US air raids, films are shown in underground galleries or under cover of jungle foliage. During the years of US air raids there took place 446,000 performances attended by 253,500,000 spectators.

By their suggestions and criticisms, the masses help the cinema workers to unceasingly improve their work.

H. HEALTH WORK

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam pays great attention to the protection of the people's health. To lay stress on prophylaxis, combine treatment with prevention and traditional medicine with modern medicine, follow a mass line — such are the leading principles of health work.

A vast movement has been launched to propagate hygiene about housing and food. At present, nearly all families in the countryside have their own double septic tanks and each hamlet has two or three wells in brick-work.

A preventive and curative organization against epidemics has been set up, comprising the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the centre and dispensaries in the cities, provinces and districts. More than 30,000 hygiene activists work in the villages. Many vaccines have been prepared in the country and preventive vaccination is regularly carried out against many diseases. As early as 1957, certain epidemics like smallpox and cholera were eliminated. The morbidity rate for diphtheria, typhoid fever, poliomyelitis, dysentery has markedly decreased.

The colonial regime has left an appalling legacy: nearly 10 million people affected with trachoma, tens of thousands of cases of blindness. Together with the dissemination of hygiene and prophylaxis, an anti-trachoma service has been organized down to the villages. Operations for trichiasis and entropion, which formerly could only be carried out in Hanoi and Haiphong, are now done in medico-sanitary stations in the villages, construction sites, State farms and factories.

Preventive vaccination against tuberculosis by dead BCG is performed in a massive way. A vast network of anti-tuberculosis establishments has been set up with hospitals at the centre and in the provinces, dispensaries in the districts and villages. Positive results have been scored.

In 1961, a large-scale struggle against malaria was launched. By late 1965 this disease had been practically liquidated in the whole of North Viet Nam.

Prostitution has been abolished and venereal diseases which were rampant under the old regime have been effectively combated.

Under the colonial domination, the Vietnamese countryside had no health establishments. In the hospitals of major cities and provincial capitals the number of beds was very small. The government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has, right from the start, enlarged the health network and trained health officers on a large scale. Thanks to the efforts of both the State and the people, all villages in the delta and 90 per cent of those in the highlands now have their own health stations and maternity houses, and all districts have their own hospitals. While, in 1939, there was one doctor for every 180,000 people, by 1964 there was one for 13,000 and by 1968 one for every 7,500. Tens of thousands of assistant doctors have been trained for villages, construction sites, factories, schools, and government services.

In implementation of the principle: "To rely mainly on one's own forces", a great effort has been made to turn out pharmaceutical products from local materials. At present, more than 60 per cent of our drugs are produced in the country. Nearly all provinces have their own drug-factories. Medicinal plants are grown throughout North Viet Nam. In Vinh Linh (on the 17th parallel) and Quang Binh, as in several other provinces most frequently attacked by US air forces, more than 50 per cent of the drugs are prepared with local plants. Our researchers and technicians have overcome great difficulties to prepare the Sabin anti-poliomyelitis vaccine on a large scale since 1961.

Thanks to the combination of traditional medicine with modern medicine, many common diseases can now be treated with good

results : certain liver ailments, neuropsychiatric troubles, rheumatisms, haemorrhoids, diarrhoeic syndromes, headaches, boils, anaemia...

Great attention has been devoted to the protection of mothers and children. Committees have been created to this end in many construction sites, factories, State farms, government offices and agricultural cooperatives. Each hospital has a pediatrics ward and an obstetrics ward. Moreover, there are several hospitals reserved for women and children.

The efforts made in the field of health have led to good results : the death rates — general, infantile, and maternal—have markedly decreased. In 1965, health work had to cope with new difficulties. While taking the necessary measures to protect health installations against air raids (by November 1st, 1968, 607 hospitals and health stations had been destroyed), one had to carry out prophylaxis struggle against epidemics and care for the victims of enemy bombings. To this end, health establishments were evacuated or dispersed, shelters and trenches built, the health network reorganized, cadres sent to refresher courses and new ones trained. Besides prophylactic and therapeutic work, village health stations were entrusted with the treatment of shock and light wounds. A certain number of villages subjected to murderous bombings could perform part of the work usually done by district hospitals, thus handling on the spot 80 per cent of the cases. For their part, district hospitals treated the more serious wounds : burns from various causes and of various degrees, limb fractures, wounds in the stomach, spleen, thorax, skull, face, jaw, ear, nose, larynx. Provincial hospitals looked after 3rd-degree wounds.

In order to give timely aid to the war victims, surgeons were sent to the countryside. Apart from the regular training of surgeons, short-term courses in surgery were opened for village nurses, assistant doctors of districts and provinces and other specialists. Mobile surgery teams were set up to cope with emergency cases.

Thanks to this reorganization of the health network and to the new repartition of cadres in 1967 and 1968, in the regions worst hit by the enemy the death rate among the wounded decreased by 50-60% compared with 1965, the first year of the US war of destruction. Research work has also experienced a continual development in the crucible of the war. In 1967, out of the 1,014 subjects tackled, 914 received practical applications. Most of them dealt with the treatment of shock, wounds due to

steel-pellet bombs, burns from napalm and phosphorus, fractures, lesions of blood vessels, as well as with the struggle against chemical and biological warfare. Many scientific workers have grappled with long-term problems such as the elimination of social diseases (malaria, trachoma), the struggle against cancer, allergy, diseases of the heart and the liver ; they have also studied the problems set by the war : sequels of war wounds, neuropsychiatric diseases, as well as the treatment of helminthiases, improvement of nutrition, struggle against professional diseases, and betterment of the people's living conditions. The lack of technical equipment, however, restricts our possibilities and hampers scientific research.

I. PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORTS

In the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, physical training and sports are aimed at improving the labouring people's health, serving production and national defence, and contributing to the formation of the new man.

Since the US war of destruction started in August 1964, physical training and sports have not only kept on developing but also grown in quality. Everywhere from town to countryside, from the plains to the highlands, in schools, government offices, factories and cooperatives, a vast movement "to practise gymnastics and sports in order to struggle against the US aggressors" has spread among the masses, especially the youth, the people's militia and the self-defence forces. The development of national defence sports has been regarded as a foremost task.

Besides parachute jumping, piloting of aircraft and glider, motorcycle riding, boat sailing, diving with loads, which continue to be taught, stress has been laid upon five sports (race with weapons, obstacle race, swimming with weapons, shooting and wrestling) which prepare millions of the youth for the fighting.

Morning exercises are regularly practised by millions of people, even in regions where combat is raging. "Refreshing exercises" are carried out during breaks and "preventive and curative gymnastics against diseases" are practised by students, workers and civil servants.

A regulation enacted in 1962 has made physical training a duty as well as a right of the citizen. Millions of people have passed exams and reached set norms. Under new conditions these norms have been modified and the training programme now includes the five national defence sports

In the mass sports, besides athletics, swimming, football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, which continue to be practised, we encourage walking, marathon and national boxing.

The formation and amelioration of cadres has received particular attention. Apart from a central school with three degrees: secondary, superior, and complementary, other schools have been opened in various branches of activity, cities and provinces, with two degrees: elementary and secondary. The Service of Physical Training and Sports collaborate with the health service to train physicians specialized in the treatment of ailments and injuries due to the practice of sports, the study of "preventive and curative gymnastics against diseases", the scientific study of physical training and sports, etc.

Thus despite the war, thanks to adequate measures of dispersal and protection, physical training and sports have been practised even in regions subject to daily enemy bombing, near anti-aircraft gun emplacements and trench-shelters. Nearly one thousand "elite units of physical training and sports" have been commended in schools, factories, government offices, agricultural cooperatives and people's armed forces units. Competitions have been regularly organized each year.

Chapter VI

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

THE foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam serves the political tasks of the Vietnamese people, namely to defeat US aggression, build a peaceful, unified, independent democratic and prosperous Viet Nam, while contributing to enhancing solidarity with the world's people struggling for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

This policy derives its strength from the nature of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the objectives and characters of the just fight of the Vietnamese people, the unity of our entire people, and the support of progressive mankind.

The founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is the outcome of the heroic and tenacious struggle of the Vietnamese people against imperialism and colonialism for nearly a century. We pledge to fulfil the Oath of Independence of September 2, 1945, and to resolutely answer the call of President Ho Chi Minh for national salvation: "We would rather sacrifice all than lose our country and be enslaved." To defend their Fatherland the Vietnamese people have firmly opposed the US imperialists' scheme to put half of Viet Nam under the US-Chiang rule, and valiantly waged two wars of resistance: that against the French colonialists and the US interventionists in the past and that against the US imperialist aggressors at present. The foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is closely related to the struggle of the Vietnamese people to safeguard independence and freedom.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is a member and a forward post of the socialist camp in Southeast Asia. Linked to the immense socialist camp, it constitutes a firm rear area for the South Vietnamese people in their struggle to complete national liberation, while the latter's liberation struggle helps defend the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and contributes to safeguarding the security of the socialist camp.

On the Indochinese peninsula, the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples had been put under colonial rule for many years. Since long, especially over the past twenty-five years, the Indochinese peoples have evinced a tradition of militant solidarity against the common enemy. The more cruel the imperialists and the colonialists are — be they French, Japanese or American — the more united the peoples of Indochina stand, determined to fight for independence and freedom, and to chart the course for their own respective development. The foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is closely related to the struggle for national liberation of the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples.

Our time is one of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale, a time when the world revolution is developing vigorously and winning repeated successes, while imperialism steadily weakens and is doomed to extinction: the struggle of the Vietnamese people to take the Democratic Republic of Viet

Nam to socialism and to build an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral South Viet Nam advancing to the peaceful reunification of the country, is an active part of the world revolution for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. This struggle enjoys the encouragement and support of the world revolution while contributing to impelling it forward. The foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is bound up with the revolutionary cause of the world's people.

Over the last twenty-five years, the foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has scored success after success, thus contributing to enhancing the prestige and status of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the world arena. Formerly encircled by imperialism, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam now has diplomatic and trade and cultural relations with many countries in Asia, Africa, Australasia, Europe and Latin America. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam won a great victory with the signing of the 1954 Geneva Agreements which recognize and guarantee the national rights of the Indochinese peoples, and contributed to the success of the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos. Today the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Republic of South Viet Nam play an active role in the resistance against US imperialist aggression, for the preservation of peace and security in Indochina and Asia.

The victory of Vietnamese diplomacy is the victory of the superior political regime of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the victory of the sound political and military line of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam under the leadership of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, the victory of the lofty solidarity of the forces of socialism, national liberation, peace, and democracy in the world with the Vietnamese people.

The US imperialists are obviously losing their war in Viet Nam. However, they are extremely obdurate and perfidious. They strive to "Vietnamize" the war in the hope of prolonging it, prolonging their military occupation of South Viet Nam and maintaining there a subservient administration carrying out US neo-colonialism. With regard to North Viet Nam, they continue to encroach upon the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Moreover, they have intensified their

"special war" in Laos, brazenly invaded peaceful and neutral Cambodia, extended the war to the whole of Indochina in application of the "Nixon doctrine": to make Asians fight Asians. They are gravely sabotaging peace and security in this area.

The Summit Conference of the Indochinese peoples held late in April 1970 affirmed the determination of the three peoples to enhance their solidarity and fight on shoulder to shoulder until victory against the US imperialist aggressors, the common enemy of the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples, in order to safeguard their independence and freedom, make Indochina a truly independent and peaceful zone, in conformity with the aspirations of the three peoples and the interests of peace in Southeast Asia and the world. The Conference also affirmed their determination to consolidate and promote friendly relations and neighbourly ties between the three countries in their mutual support against the common enemy and in their future lasting co-operation to build their respective lands according to their own respective ways.

The stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the Indochina problem is that the United States, which has attacked the Indochinese countries, must end its aggression unconditionally and rapidly withdraw all US and satellite troops from South Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos, and let the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples settle their own internal affairs and their relations with each other without foreign interference.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam fully supports the ten-point overall solution of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam aimed at settling the South Viet Nam problem and contributing to the restoration of peace in Viet Nam.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam fully supports the March 23, 1970 five-point Proclamation of Samdech Head of State of the Kingdom of Cambodia Norodom Sihanouk and the Political Programme of the National United Front of Kampuchea and recognizes the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia as the sole legitimate and authentic government of the Khmer people.

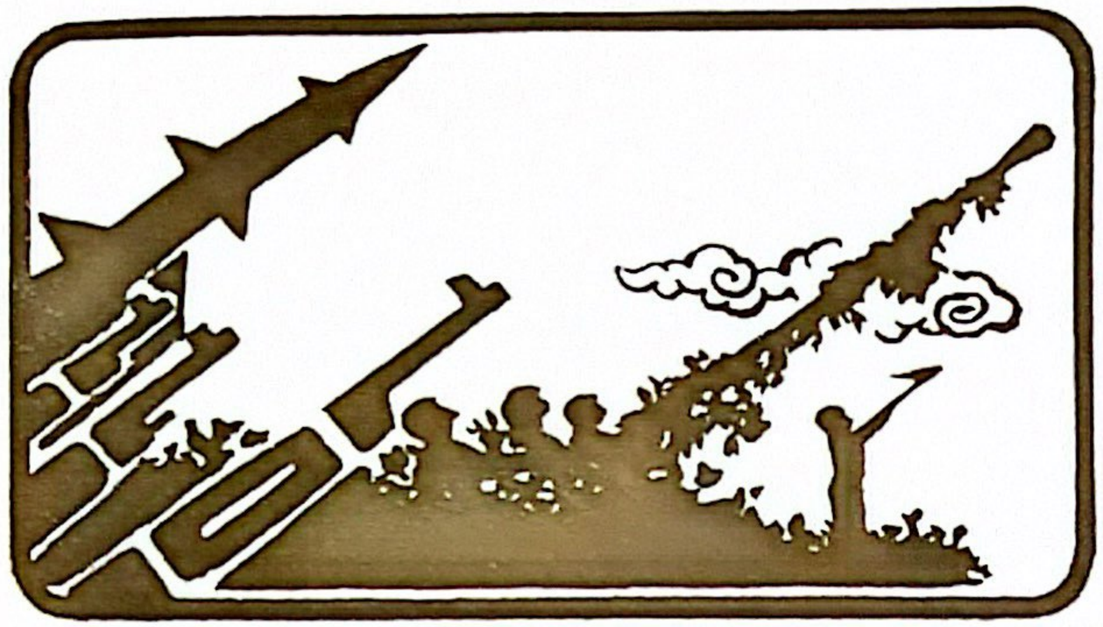
The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam fully supports the five-point solution advanced on March 6, 1970 by the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front headed by Prince Souphanouvong and considers it a correct solution to the

Lao problem on the basis of the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos and the present concrete situation in that country.

Acting upon the Testament of President Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people are determined to pursue and push forward their war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, step up solidarity and mutual support and assistance between the Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese peoples in the fight to safeguard their fundamental national rights and oppose the US imperialist aggressors and their lackeys until the American invaders are driven out of their respective countries.

With the invincible strength of their national unity, the powerful support of the socialist countries, the increasing support of peace- and justice-loving governments and peoples, and of American progressive people, the just struggle of the Vietnamese, like those of the Khmer and Lao peoples, will certainly end in glorious victory.

Over the past twenty-five years, the foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has won many successes. It will surely achieve even greater successes in the future because the war of resistance of the Vietnamese people against US aggression, for national salvation has been recording victory after victory and because the revolutions of the Khmer and Lao peoples are vigorously advancing on the way to victory. No reactionary force can check this trend.



Chapter VII

AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION, FOR INDEPENDENCE, UNITY AND PEACE

I. The origins of the war

S soon as the Second World War ended, the United States seeking to "fill up the vacuum" left by the former colonial powers, nurtured aggressive schemes against Viet Nam.

In 1945 the Americans proposed to the provisional government of the DRVN an aid tied to several conditions. These advances were rejected.

However, Washington kept on trying to lay its hands on Indochina.

1950-1954 : U.S. intervention in the Indochina war

Taking advantage of the French colonialists' weakening position, the United States intervened step by step in the Indochina conflict, both to fight the Vietnamese people struggling for their independence and to replace the French.

By means of a military treaty signed in December 1950 between the United States, France and Bao Dai, Washington supplied money and weapons to help the French carry on the war and set up a military mission — the MAAG — in Saigon.

The US embassy in Saigon declared on January 27, 1954 that from 1950 to December 1953, the United States had supplied the French Expeditionary Corps with 400,000 tons of war material, including 1,400 tanks and other armoured vehicles, 340 planes, 350 naval craft, 15,000 radio-sets, 150,000 light arms, 240 million small-caliber cartridges and 15 million others. US aid, amounting to 2.6 billion dollars from 1950 to 1954, covered 80 percent of the war expenditure in 1953-1954.

Early in 1954, when French expeditionary troops were encircled at Dien Bien Phu, the Americans contemplated an intervention in force. French generals and their American counterparts had worked out Operation "Vautour", a plan for massive raids by 69 US heavy bombers supported by 300 fighter planes, which were to dislocate the battle array of the Viet Nam People's Army around Dien Bien Phu and clear the place. Richard Nixon, then Vice-President, fully supported the project. Admiral Radford, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, even wanted to use tactical atomic bombs in Viet Nam.

The fight successfully waged by the Vietnamese people on all theatres of operation and the opposition of world opinion foiled that plot. Washington then vainly strove to sabotage the 1954 Geneva Conference. All US attempts between 1950 and 1954 to crush the Vietnamese national movement in order to prolong the war had failed. This was the first US failure in Indochina.

The Geneva Agreements signed on July 20, 1954, comprise military and political clauses.

The Accords recognize the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam. The French Expeditionary Corps

and the "French Union Forces" were to regroup south of the 17th parallel.

Article 6 of the Final Declaration stipulates that this "military demarcation line is provisional and shall not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary."

The Agreements prohibit the introduction into Viet Nam of all troop reinforcements and foreign military personnel, armaments, munitions and other war material ; the establishment of foreign military bases in the regroupment zones and the participation of either party to any military alliance.

To help bring about Viet Nam's peaceful reunification, general elections were to be held in July 1956 throughout the country. Consultations were to take place on this subject between the competent authorities as from July 20, 1955.

If these prescriptions had been followed, the Vietnamese people would have been living since long in peace in an independent, reunified and democratic fatherland.

However, the United States intervened with all its might to sabotage the accords.

1954-1960 : the "undeclared war"

President Eisenhower declared as early as July 21, 1954, "The United States has not been a party to, or bound by, the decisions taken at the Conference". Later, in his memoirs *(Mandate for Change)*, Eisenhower admits that "had elections been held... possibly 80 percent of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh."

Eisenhower wrote to Ngo Dinh Diem on October 1,1954, "It (US government) hopes that such an aid (US aid), combined with your own continuing efforts, will contribute effectively toward an independent Viet Nam endowed with a strong government."

On the strength of the political support and the dollars of his American bosses, Diem refused all consultation with the North despite the many offers by the DRVN Government. He worked out a "Constitution", rigged up a "national assembly", proclaimed himself president of the "Republic of Viet Nam". All this was in flagrant violation of the Geneva Agreements and was aimed at creating a separate South Viet Nam and perpetuating the division of the country.

Behind a national façade, American missions organized the army, the police and the security services. Armaments, military

personnel and equipment poured in. Strategic roads, air and naval bases were built for the logistic needs of a huge and modern army.

However, Washington had reckoned without the resistance of the South Vietnamese people, resolved to defend national independence and achieve the reunification of the country.

Fierce repression was Diem's answer to the political struggle waged by the population in the form of demonstrations and strikes in which they demanded the implementation of the Geneva Agreements, the holding of general elections, the improvement of living conditions... He ordered his troops to fire at unarmed demonstrations, persecuted patriots whom he called Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists), and resorted to mass murders. Prisons and concentration camps mushroomed. The army launched large-scale mopping-up operations. It was a real unilateral war against the population.

By 1960, 80,000 people had been massacred, 23,000 wounded, 275,000 jailed and 500,000 herded into concentration camps.

After several years of political struggle, in order not to be decimated, the South Vietnamese population had to combine armed struggle with political struggle.

In 1959, armed self-defence groups were set up by the Nam Bo peasants and the ethnic minorities of the Tay Nguyen highlands. The insurrectional movement gradually spread over the whole South Viet Nam countryside, chasing away the local administrations and establishing self-management people's committees.

In the crucible of the struggle, the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation came into being in December 1960. It rallied all patriots, irrespective of age, sex, ethnic origin, religious belief and political tendency. It was the brain, the organizer of a political and armed struggle which gained momentum with every passing day.

1960-1964 : the "special war"

By late 1960, the Kennedy administration had to admit failure: the neo-colonial regime implanted in Saigon was shattered by popular opposition: this was the second American failure.

Johnson, then Vice-President, was sent to Saigon to sign a joint communique with Diem on May 11, 1961.

It was in fact a treaty of military alliance. The Saigon mercenaries came under the effective command of American officers whose number unceasingly increased. A U.S. operational command was set up in Saigon as early as February 1962 with General Paul

D. Harkins at its head. Helicopters, amphibious tanks, napalm, toxic chemicals... came to reinforce the arsenal of the dictator Diem.

In Johnson's wake came General Taylor, American number one strategist and the economist Staley. They worked out a plan for the pacification of South Viet Nam within 18 months. All the rural population was to be penned up in 16,000 concentration camps dubbed "strategic hamlets". In a country thus chequered, the Saigon army, commanded by American officers, was to liquidate the guerillas and other popular armed forces. This was the "special war".

The popular resistance to the "special war" foiled all those schemes.

The situation rapidly worsened in Saigon, so much so that Washington had to swap horses in mid-stream. On November 1, 1963 Diem and his brother Nhu were liquidated. Several generals considered more efficient were put on the stage: they merely offered a tragic sequence of coups d'état. The "strategic hamlets" built at great pain were destroyed for the most part and four-fifths of the South Vietnamese territory liberated.

For the Saigon troops undermined by losses and desertions, the year 1964 ended in a resounding military defeat: Binh Gia. Neither the helicopters, the aviation, the toxic chemicals, nor the artillery could save the puppet army.

From 1965 onward : "limited war" and "war escalation"

To save the Saigon regime, Washington considerably hardened its war policy, launching a large-scale air and naval aggression against the DRVN and sending to South Viet Nam an American expeditionary corps and satellite troops for direct participation in the war.

US planes bombed various localities in North Viet Nam from August 5 to 9, 1964. The bombings were resumed on February 7, 1965 and continued without let-up.

This war of destruction against the DRVN was aimed at breaking the morale of the Vietnamese people both in the North and in the South, rapidly forcing them to surrender and nipping in the bud the building of socialism in North Viet Nam.

Throughout four years, planes of all types were mobilized by the Pentagon to rain over one million tons of bombs on North Viet Nam. They destroyed most of the towns and urban centres, razed markets, schools, hospitals, dwelling houses, inflicting many losses in lives and properties upon the civilian population. They hammered away at bridges and communication lines, dikes and dams,

in the hope of paralysing production and transport. More than 7,000 violations of the Hanoi air space and 327 bomb and rocket attacks were recorded against the capital.

However, this war of destruction did not bring Washington the results it had expected:

The DRVN remained firm and its economy stable. Its riposte was vigorous. The US command, without reaching any of its strategic aims, had lost over 3,000 modern aircraft, supersonic planes for the most part, and many pilots had been killed or captured.

In South Viet Nam, the "special war" was replaced by the "limited war". With US and satellite troops as spearheads backed by Saigon mercenaries, the United States openly waged a war of aggression.

Late in 1965, after having brought in 200,000 men, the Pentagon mounted the first dry season counter-offensive, in winter 1965-spring 1966. Despite the importance of the means deployed, the American troops suffered heavy setbacks. Washington then sent new reinforcements, bringing the expeditionary corps to 400,000. A second counter-offensive was launched in winter 1966-spring 1967, but also ended in a fiasco.

By the end of 1967, new reinforcements had raised the Expeditionary Corps to 500,000 men who fought alongside 620,000 Saigon mercenaries and 65,000 satellite troops. The Pentagon used this large army for a series of large-scale operations. A fleet of nearly 10,000 planes and helicopters of all types day and night rained bombs and shells and chemical agents on South Viet Nam. US aggression took on an unprecedentedly ferocious and barbarous character.

Meanwhile, the American government stepped up its "special war" in Laos, and US and puppet troops brazenly encroached upon Khmer frontiers and territory.

All this display of force and violence, however, failed to browbeat the South Vietnamese people. Using a multiform tactic, both clever and bold, they succeeded in inflicting severe losses in men and war means upon the US and puppet troops. The people's liberation armed forces grew up with the fighting and recorded success after success. This armed struggle was combined with political struggle, and coordinated with the struggle of the urban population.

Starting on the night of January 29, 1968, and for nearly 30 days the South Vietnamese armed forces and people launched large-scale attacks and simultaneous uprisings in all theatres of operation.

They stormed all the major cities, nearly all the provincial capitals and district centres, a great number of military bases, air bases and storage depots.

Over 90,000 enemy troops were put out of action, among them 20,000 GIs and foreign mercenaries. Three armoured regiments, 39 battalions (mostly infantry), eight armoured squadrons and 120 companies were annihilated. The puppet army disintegrated by big chunks, and so did the puppet militia, regional forces and police. A huge amount of war material was destroyed: 1,800 planes and helicopters downed or destroyed on the ground, 300 tanks and armoured cars, thousands of military vehicles, 90 naval craft and millions of tons of bombs, shells and fuel.

The population of urban centres and rural regions under enemy control rose up to break his grip, liberate vast regions, many district capitals and towns, and establish revolutionary power.

In the newly freed regions, the population organized itself to cope with the enemy. Tens of thousands of youths enlisted in the popular armed forces.

The Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, set up in April 1968, was active in the towns. The NFL was ever more consolidated and broadened.

A new stage of the resistance opened. The people's armed forces rapidly grew up. The US command had to adopt a strictly defensive strategy, US and puppet troops were compelled to withdraw to the urban centres, and to their bases and vital communication lines.

On March 31, 1968, the Johnson administration declared that it would thenceforth restrict its bombings against North Viet Nam, and stand ready to negotiate. In fact, the US aviation concentrated its attacks against the southern part of the DRVN, causing considerable damage there. Washington hoped to demoralize the population and completely cut off North-South communications. But this was in vain. In face of the firm attitude of the DRVN government which demanded an unconditional cessation of all bombings on the whole of its territory, on November 1, 1968, Johnson had to order the latter to be stopped. The Paris Conference opened on January 19, 1969.

2. The stand of the Vietnamese people

The Vietnamese resistance against US aggression both in the South and in the North has no other purpose than to safeguard these fundamental national rights of every people: independence, freedom, unity. It aims at liberating the South, defending the North and promoting the peaceful reunification of the country.

US aggression is at the origin of this conflict.

The US imperialists must put an end to their aggression and withdraw all US and satellite troops from South Viet Nam so that the South Vietnamese population can settle by itself its internal affairs and the populations of North and South can agree on the modalities of the peaceful reunification of their country.

The Vietnamese people deem that like any other people they are entitled to fight aggression in any place of their territory in order to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The 1954 Geneva Agreements which recognize Viet Nam's independence, unity and territorial integrity conform to the legitimate interests and aspirations of our people. Therefore, they have consistently respected these accords and demanded that the parties concerned abide by their spirit.

Heir to a tradition of national unity, they direct the spearhead of their struggle against the foreign aggressors and are ready to achieve national concord. In the present situation in the South, all national, democratic, peace and neutralist forces have united to build an independent, democratic, peaceful and prosperous South Viet Nam pending an agreement between the population of the two zones to peacefully reunify their country.

The Vietnamese people discriminate between the imperialist aggressors and the American people who have no interest in this war. The Vietnamese people feel themselves more and more closely bound to the progressive forces in the United States which have been waging a courageous action to demand from the American government an end to this war, the source of many crimes against our two peoples.

Expounding the will and the aspirations of the Vietnamese people, as early as April 8, 1965, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam put forward a four-point stand for the settlement of the Vietnamese problem.

1. The fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people must be recognized, namely, peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. According to the Geneva Agreements, the US government must withdraw all troops, military personnel, weapons, munitions and war material from South Viet Nam, dismantle all US military bases there, cancel its "military alliance" with the puppet administration in the South and at the same time end all encroachments on the territory and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Viet Nam, while Viet Nam is still temporarily divided into two zones, the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam must be respected: the two zones must refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries and there must be no foreign military bases, troops, and military personnel in their respective territories.

3. The affairs of South Viet Nam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves, in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, without any foreign interference.

4. The peaceful reunification of Viet Nam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference.

On May 8, 1969, the National Front for Liberation put forward the principles and main content of an overall solution in ten points for the restoration of peace in Viet Nam:

1. The fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people must be respected, namely, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam;

2. The US government must withdraw from South Viet Nam all US troops, military personnel, weapons and war material, and all troops, military personnel, weapons and war material of the other foreign countries of the US camp without laying down any condition whatsoever; liquidate all US bases in South Viet Nam, renounce all encroachments on the sovereignty, territory and security of South Viet Nam and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

3. The right of the Vietnamese people to fight for the defence of their Fatherland is the sacred, inalienable right to self-defence of all peoples. The question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Viet Nam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves.

4. The South Vietnamese people settle by themselves their own affairs without foreign interference. They decide themselves the political regime of South Viet Nam through free and democratic general elections. Through free and democratic general elections, a Constituent Assembly will be set up, a Constitution worked out, and a coalition government of South Viet Nam established, symbolizing national concord and the broad union of all social strata.

5. During the period between the restoration of peace and the holding of general elections, neither party shall impose its political regime on the people of South Viet Nam.

The political forces representing the various social strata and political tendencies in South Viet Nam that stand for peace, independence and neutrality, including those persons who, for political reasons, have had to live abroad, will enter into talks to set up a provisional coalition government based on the principle of equality, democracy and mutual respect with a view to achieving a peaceful, independent, democratic and neutral South Viet Nam.

The provisional coalition government shall have the following tasks:

a) To implement the agreements concluded on the withdrawal of the troops of the United States, and those of the other foreign countries on the American side, etc.

b) To achieve national concord and a broad union of all social strata, political forces, nationalities, religious communities, and all persons, no matter what their political beliefs and their past may be, provided they stand for peace, independence, and neutrality.

c) To achieve broad democratic freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief, freedom to establish political parties and organizations, freedom to demonstrate, etc.; to set free all persons jailed on political grounds; to prohibit all acts of terror, reprisal and discrimination against people having collaborated with either side, and who are now either in the country or abroad, as provided for in the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam.

d) To heal the war wounds, restore and develop the economy, restore to normal the life of the people, and improve the living conditions of the labouring people.

e) To hold free and democratic general elections in the whole of South Viet Nam with a view to realizing the right for the South Vietnamese people to settle themselves their own affairs in accordance with the content of point 4 mentioned above.

6. South Viet Nam shall carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality:

To pursue a good-neighbour policy with the Kingdom of Cambodia on the basis of respect for her independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity within her present borders; to carry out a good-neighbour policy with the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos.

To establish diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with all countries, irrespective of political and social regime, including the United States, in accordance with the five principles of peaceful co-existence: respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non interference in each

other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful co-existence; to accept economic and technical aid without political conditions attached from any country.

7. The reunification of Viet Nam shall be achieved step by step by peaceful means, on the basis of discussions and agreements between the two zones, without foreign interference.

Pending the peaceful reunification of Viet Nam, the two zones shall re-establish normal relations in all fields on the basis of mutual respect.

The military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel, as provided for by the 1954 Geneva Agreements, is a provisional line and does not constitute in any way a political or territorial boundary. The two zones shall reach agreement on the status of the demilitarized zone, and work out modalities governing movements across the provisional military demarcation line.

8. As provided for in the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, pending the peaceful reunification of Viet Nam, the two zones undertake to refrain from joining any alliance with foreign countries, not to allow any foreign country to maintain military bases, troops and military personnel on their respective territories, and not to recognize the protection of any country or military alliance or bloc.

9. To do away with the aftermaths of the war:

a) The parties concerned shall negotiate the release of armymen captured in the war.

b) The US government must bear full responsibility for the losses and devastations it has caused to the Vietnamese people in both zones.

10. The parties concerned shall reach agreement on an international supervision of the withdrawal from South Viet Nam of the troops, military personnel, arms and war material of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American side.

The principles and content of the overall solution expounded above form a whole. On the basis of these principles and content, the parties concerned shall reach understanding to the effect of concluding agreements on the above-mentioned questions with a view to ending the war in South Viet Nam and contributing to the restoration of peace in Viet Nam.

As soon as it was founded, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam adopted the above

solution, which the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam had unreservedly approved.

The entire Vietnamese people enthusiastically welcome this solution and strive to cause it to prevail at the Paris Conference.

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Facts, however, show that for the Nixon administration, the Paris Conference is but an alibi. Nixon does not want in the least to negotiate, for he still seeks military and political victory in Viet Nam. By the "Vietnamization" of the war he merely wants to shift a major part of the military burden onto the Saigon mercenary troops supported by important US air and naval forces. Far from putting an end to the war, "Vietnamization" only prolongs it and perpetuates the occupation of South Viet Nam by US troops. Bombings and "pacification" operations are stepped up.

Nixon goes even further than Johnson. Since 1969, he has intensified the war in Laos and sent specially-trained mercenaries and Thai forces to invade the zone controlled by the Lao patriotic forces, the Plain of Jars - Xieng Khouang area. These ground operations are accompanied with violent bombings by US planes taking off from Thailand and flying up to 500 sorties a day.

In March 1970, US secret services, through the agency of the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak clique, fomented a coup d'état in Phnom Penh and overthrew Head of State Prince Norodom Sihanouk. American then Saigon troops invaded Cambodia, a neutral country, in successive waves, destroyed whole towns, many industrial and agricultural installations, and massacred the Khmer population. The Phnom Penh puppets, carrying out the same policy as their Saigon and Thai accomplices, ordered their troops to shoot at Khmer crowds demonstrating their patriotism and loyalty to Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, and had Vietnamese residents massacred.

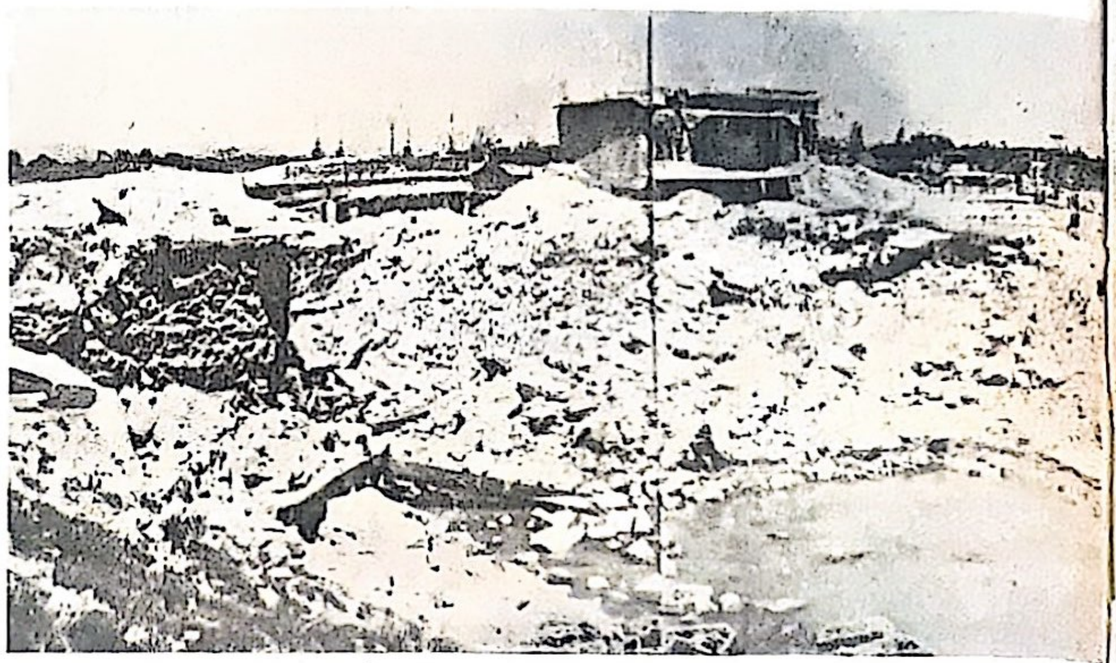
By prolonging the war in Viet Nam, extending it to the whole of Indochina, bringing in Thai forces, and mobilizing the governments of Jakarta, Manila, Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo, Washington tries to implement the Nixon doctrine : to fight national and social liberation movements in Asia by using Asians. Asian troops equipped and trained by Americans, supported by US air and naval forces, and if need be by US quick intervention ground forces, are entrusted with fighting the national and popular movements of Asian countries. The reactionaries in these countries grouped under the crook of Washington constitute a real "Holy Alliance" with huge over-equipped armies. A vast civil war will therefore be maintained throughout Asia of which Washington hopes to pull the strings and reap all the advantages.

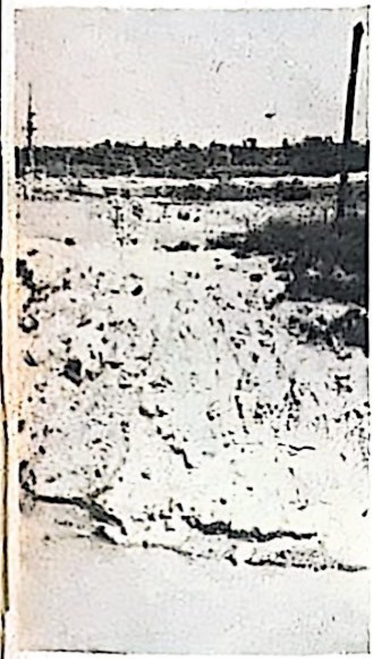
Starting from Viet Nam, the US neo-colonialist policy has ended by fanning up the flames of war in all three Indochinese countries. Peace in Southeast Asia and in the world is thus gravely threatened.

However, the neo-colonialist and warlike policy of Washington clashes with the unshakable resolve of the Indochinese peoples to defend their independence and freedom, and with the militant unity of all progressive and peace forces in the world, including the United States. The Vietnamization of the war advanced by Nixon is being completely foiled ; the South Vietnamese popular forces unceasingly strike the US and puppet bases ; even the towns and particularly Saigon, are subjected to large-scale attacks although the US Command has concentrated considerable means for their defence. In Laos, fighting off the offensive of pro-US forces, the Lao patriotic forces have vigorously counter-attacked and driven the enemy out of the Plain of Jars and vast regions in Southern Laos. In Cambodia, responding to the appeal by Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, people of all strata, bonzes, intellectuals, many functionaries and armymen have rallied round the National United Front of Kampuchea and recognized the Royal Government of National Union presided by Prince Sihanouk as the only legitimate government. The armed resistance of the Khmer people against the invasion of US and Saigon troops and against the exactions of the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak troops, has developed apace and liberated vast areas.

In face of US aggression, a united front of the Indochinese peoples has been set up in fact, for a common struggle to safeguard the independence and freedom of the three peoples and lay the bases for a fruitful cooperation in the future. The aggressive and neo-colonialist policy of the United States has run up against this front, against this unshakable will of the Indochinese peoples. It runs counter to the historical trend which carries the Indochinese peoples towards the regaining of their independence and building of a future of prosperity and justice. It is doomed to fall.

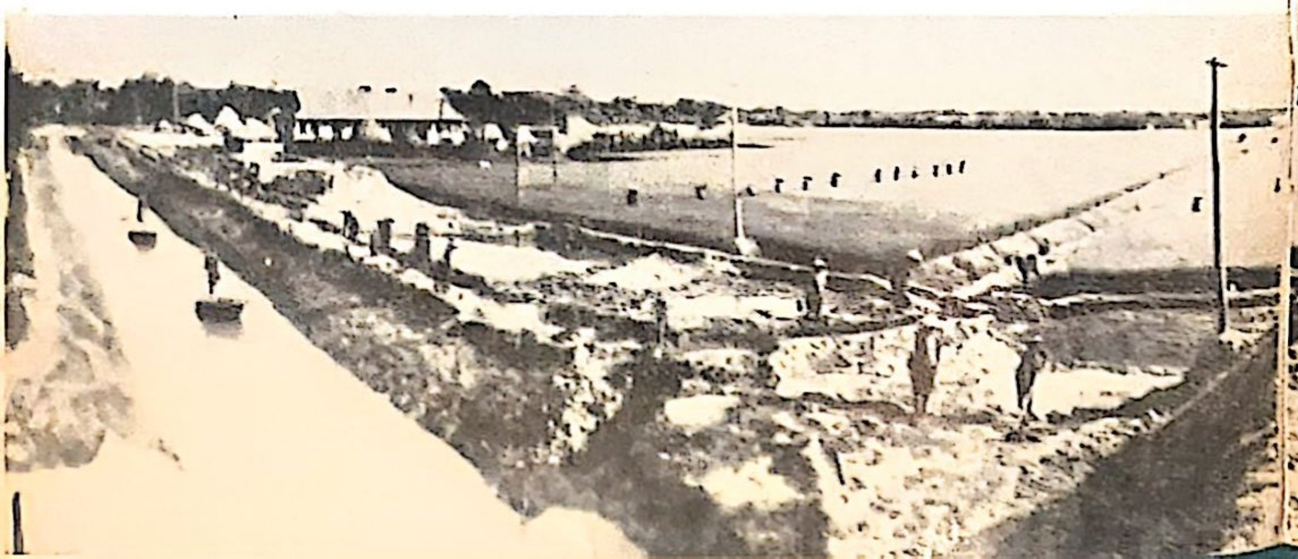
Harvests are brought in despite US bombings (Quang Khe agricultural cooperative, Thanh Hoa province).

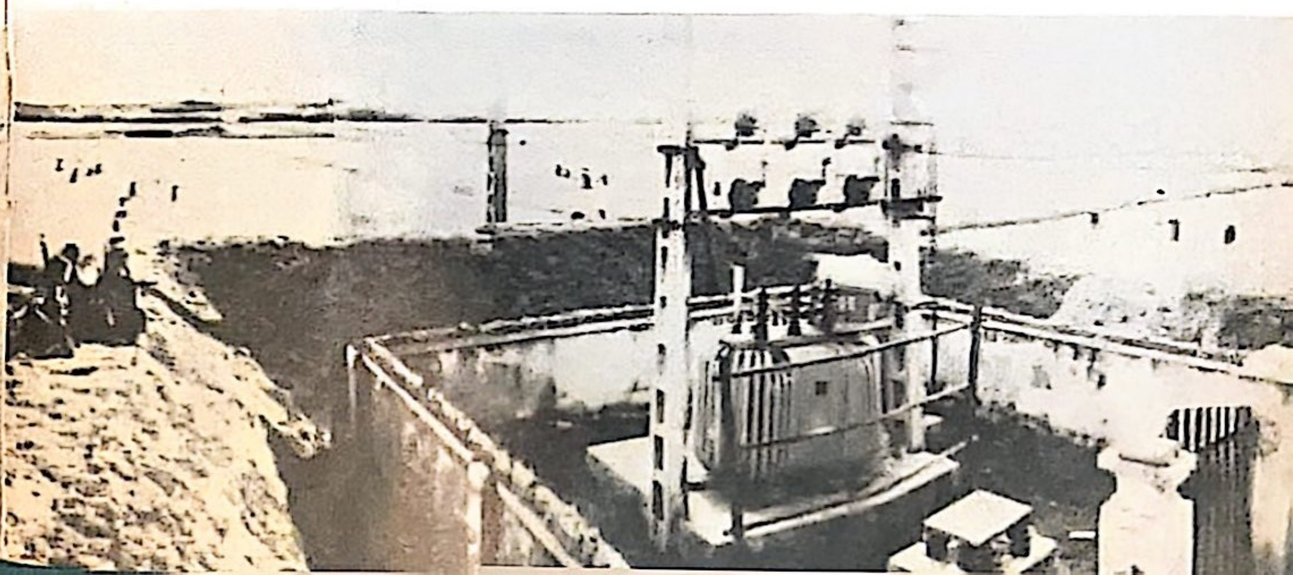




The Ban Thach dam (in Thanh Hoa province), one of the hydraulic works destroyed by US aviation.

North Vietnamese countryside at present.





Industrial production continues under the bombings : a workshop evacuated to a cave.

A drawing lesson, in an air-raid shelter.

Mme Nguyen Thi Dinh, deputy Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Armed Forces of South Viet Nam **(wearing scarf)**.

A scene of the Têt 1968 popular offensive in Saigon.

Political struggle in the enemy-occupied towns of South Viet Nam : 50,000 workers turned out in the streets of Saigon on August 23, 1963

Popular engravings.

ANNEX

I. HANOI

Hanoi, the capital of the DRVN, is situated at the confluence of the Red River and the Duong River. It comprises four districts and four suburban districts. It covers an area of 580 square kilometres with a population of 1,100,000.

In 1010, King Ly Thai To moved his capital from Hoa Lu (Ninh Binh province) to Dai La (on the site of present-day Hanoi) which he renamed Thang Long (Soaring Dragon). Only in 1831 was the city named Hanoi (The City between the Rivers).

Hanoi has shared the vicissitudes as well as glories of the nation. One of the Vietnamese people's resounding military exploits it witnessed was the victory gained over the Ching (1789) by King Quang Trung of the Tay Son, who defeated a 200,000-strong aggressive army at the gates of the city.

On August 19, 1945, under the leadership of the Party's City Committee, the population wrested back power from the Japanese fascists.

On September 2, 1945, at Ba Dinh square in Hanoi President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam before 500,000 people.

On October 10, 1954, after nine years of resistance against the French colonialists, Hanoi was liberated. It has now become an important industrial centre, and the cultural and political centre of the whole country.

Under the colonial regime, Hanoi with a population of 400,000 was mainly a city of consumers; but since liberation and particularly after the socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and commerce (1960), it has become a productive city.

Compared with 1939, the number of its industrial enterprises (under either central or regional management) has increased by 20 times, that of workers by 35 times, and that of handicraft co-op members by more than 4 times. Compared with 1955, the first year after liberation, its industrial production has increased by 11 times and accounts for 25 per cent of the total industrial output of North Viet Nam. Its products are present in ever larger quantities in the export list.

In agriculture, 96.6 per cent of the peasant households on the Hanoi outskirts have joined the co-operatives. All villages now have electricity and stations of small farming machines. Electricity, mechanization and the application of farming techniques have

contributed to raising yearly rice output to more than 5 tons per hectare.

If the adults attending complementary education classes are taken into account, one out of every three Hanoi inhabitants goes to school. The number of hospitals has increased by 5 times as compared with the old regime, and that of physicians by 15 times.

Many living quarters for workers and office employees have been built in formerly marshy areas. In fifteen years (Oct 1954-Oct 1969) floor space has increased by 2.1 times as compared with that built in the more than eighty years under colonialism. A great number of cultural monuments, parks, clubs, stadiums, swimming-pools have also appeared.

The first American attack on Hanoi was made on April 7, 1966. By November 1, 1968, 257 US aircraft had been shot down over the city.

In the midst of the war, 28 new industrial enterprises and 3 new workshops were built.

In 1967, for its achievements in fighting and production, Hanoi was awarded an Independence Medal, 1st class, by the National Assembly and the Government.

Foreign aggressions and civil wars waged by feudal dynasties between themselves had destroyed many of the centuries-old monuments and palaces. However, in Hanoi there remain many historical vestiges and beauty spots such as: Lake Hoan Kiem (Lake of the Restored Sword), Ho Tay (West Lake), the Tran Vo Pagoda (1010), the Mot Cot (One-pillar) Pagoda (1049), the Temple of Literature (1070), the Temple of the two Trung Sisters (1142), the Lang Pagoda, etc.

The Co Loa Citadel, situated on the outskirts of Hanoi dates back to the 3rd century B.C. Built of earth under King An Duong, it was in the form of a spiral and covered an area of more than 5 square kilometres. Of the former nine curves of the spiral, there remain only three. In some parts, its height reaches two metres and its width 15 metres. In the centre of the citadel, there are valuable architectural and sculptural works: the temples dedicated to King An Duong and his daughter, Princess My Chau.

The Temple of Literature is situated in the heart of Hanoi; it was constructed in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius. This temple and its outbuildings cover an area 350 metres long by 70 metres wide and are surrounded by a wall of laterite bricks nearly one kilometre long.

It is well known for its Khue Van Cac (Pavilion of the Khue Constellation), collection of stelae, and Temple of Historical Vestiges.

The Ngoc Son Temple was built in the 18th century on a green islet, in the middle of the Lake of the Restored Sword (Hoan Kiem), hence its name Ngoc Son (Jade Mountain). The curved wooden bridge by which it communicates with the bank was built in 1885 and given the name of *The Huc* (The Sun Resting on the Bridge).

Near the portico of the temple is a small tower in the form of a pen-brush and the inner gate is topped with a kind of ink-slab — symbols of our people's love for study.

The Mot Cot Pagoda (One-pillar Pagoda), a wood and tile structure originally built in 1049, is the most ancient architectural work of Hanoi. Covering about 6 square metres, it rests on a big stone pillar in the middle of a pond and looks like a lotus flower emerging from its waters.

The Lang Pagoda, situated on the outskirts of Hanoi and built under the Ly dynasty (12th century), is well known for its architecture and the beauty of its carved wooden columns and beams.

II. BEAUTY SPOTS AND HISTORICAL VESTIGES

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam possesses many beauty spots, historical vestiges and valuable works of ancient architecture.

The Ha Long Bay, 165 km from Hanoi, is of worldwide fame; it is strewn with over 3,000 islets.

A vast coal-field extends along its shore.

Lake Ba Be is a resort located in a mountainous region 170 km from Hanoi at an altitude of 210 m.

8 km long and 3 km wide, it is surrounded with thick forests and dotted with several islets.

The Huong Tich Grotto is situated in a mountain of the same name. A pagoda was built there in 1575. To reach the grotto one must sail along a small river winding at the foot of rocky mountains.

The Tay Phuong Pagoda, situated 35 km from Hanoi, was built in the 11th century. Composed of three one-storeyed buildings of an original architecture, it houses 76 statues carved in jackfruit wood which are valuable works of art.

The But Thap Pagoda, constructed in 1648 (under the Le dynasty), is 20 km from Hanoi. Its main building, one-span bridge and five-storeyed tower, all built of stone, are valuable architectural works. It is also well known for a statue of a "thousand-armed and thousand-eyed Bodhisattva."

The Thay Pagoda was built in the 11th century at the foot of Mount Sai Son, 35 km from Hanoi.

In front of the pagoda lies a lake in the middle of which is a small stage built on stilts for puppet shows on festive days.

The statues, altars, columns and beams of the pagoda are typical works of art.

The Binh Son Tower, situated 70 km from Hanoi and dating back to the 11th century, is built of light red bricks. Those bricks in the form of set squares are joined together by a clever system of imbrication. They are decorated with harmonious designs.

The Co Le Pagoda was built in 1010, 93 km from Hanoi.

Dien Bien Phu is a large valley 600km from Hanoi, surrounded by high mountains and thick forests. It has a museum constructed in commemoration of the Dien Bien Phu victory.

III. MOUNTAIN AND SEASIDE RESORTS

Tam Dao is a beauty spot and mountain resort situated in the Midlands at an altitude of 900m, 60km from Hanoi. The Tam Dao mountain range has three peaks, the highest of which towers at 1,691m. The average temperature in the hottest days is 20°C. In the surrounding areas there are many caves which gave shelter to patriots in their uprisings against the feudalists and French colonialists.

Sapa is a beauty spot and mountain resort in the Hoang Lien Range, near the border with China at an altitude of 1,200m and 300km from Hanoi. In summer the average temperature in the daytime is 18°C.

Sapa has thick forests where one can go deer- and bear-hunting. From Chapa, in fine weather, one can see Fan Si Pan or Hoang Lien Son, the highest peak in Viet Nam (3,143m) surrounded with clouds almost all the year round.

Tra Co is a seaside resort situated in the coastal province of Quang Ninh near the border with China, 300km from Hanoi. The beach of fine white sand is over 16km long.

There one can visit the communal house of Tra Co, a vestige of ancient architecture, and Mon Cay town, 7km from Tra Co, well known for its pottery and earthenware.

Do Son is a seaside resort situated in a small peninsula, 110km from Hanoi. There one can visit many ancient architectural vestiges such as the Ba De Temple (15th century), the Khanh Linh Pagoda, the Van Ngang Pagoda, the Hang Pagoda, the Buddha Cave and a small pagoda built in the 11th century on top of Mount Thap.

Sam Son is a seaside resort 150km south of Hanoi. The beach, of fine white sand, extends over 4km. There one can visit the temple dedicated to Doc Cuoc (One-legged Genie) and a twin rock called Trong Mai (The Cock and The Hen).

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